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by ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH

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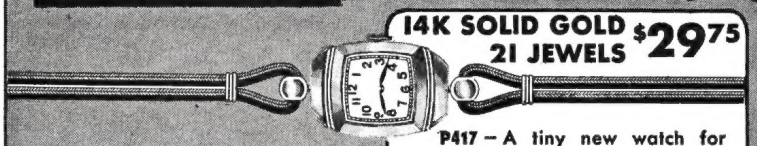

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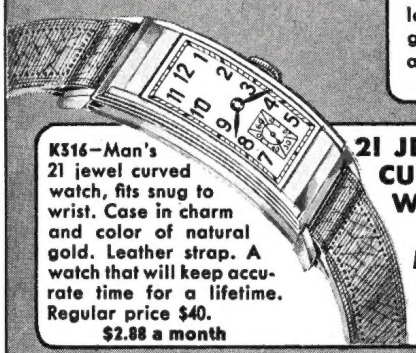

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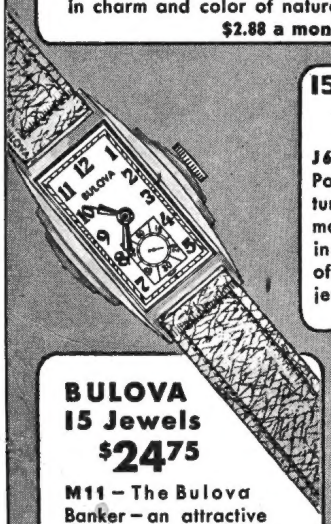

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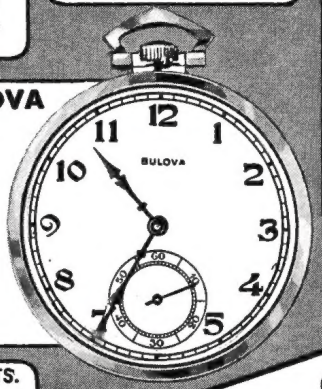

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Howard V. L. Bloomfield, Editor

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NOTE—We offer this department to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or the fates. For the benefit of the friend you seek, give your own name and full address if possible. All inquiries along this line, unless otherwise designated, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, every inquiry addressed to "Lost Trails" will be run in three consecutive issues.

Any man who served with Ambulance Company No. 3, First Sanitary Train, First Division, A. E. F., write Archibald B. Oliver, 1747 Kentucky Street, Lawrence, Kansas.

Charles W. Cantrell, 8231 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, wants word of Lieut. John Lewin and O'Neil Sievere.

Henry D. McGregor, 1708 Baker Avenue, Everett, Wash., wants to hear from an old shipmate, Gilford John Colvin, pharmacist's mate U.S.N. 1918-1919, later in Spokane, Wash.

Craig D. Hanson, who left Portland, Oregon, in 1935. Word wanted by G. P. Sylvester, 9535 S.E., Harold St., Portland, Oregon.

Where is Napier Mearns Crosett, his friend, J. Monte Dunstan, 51 South Beaver Street, York, Penn., queries.

Will "Sarge" Ralph Kingsley of Military Specialist Company, A.P.O. 727, write to "Kid" Collins Ewing, Odessa, Mo.

Captain Fred Ewing, Ex-Marine of Santo Domingo, please get in touch with Mrs. Sarrah Olson of 2103 N.W., Hoyt

LOST TRAILS

St., Portland, Oregon, or Ethel Ewing, 136-19th St., E., Holland, Michigan.

Word wanted of Hamilton Redfield Norvell, sometimes called "Reddy" or "Curley," by his brother, Stevens Thompson Norvell, 4449 Howard Ave., Western Springs, Ill. Their father died on Dec. 30, 1936. Norvell lived in Cincinnati until 1932, went to Southern Ontario.

Eugene Barry in 1912 Chief Steward S. S. Byron, New York to S. America. Later heard of in New York and in the Middle West. His brother, William Barry, Tweenways, East End, Lymington, Hampshire, England, would welcome any news.

Richard H. Wells, Box 154, Clearwater, Florida, seeks news of his friend Lee (Bill) Elliott. Last heard from was in 1922, New York State.

Wm. P. Liebenrood, who worked on construction of Madera-Mamore Railway, last heard from at Puerto Veljo, Brazil, in 1914, believed leaving there for Cuba—please send word to G. C. Hagerman, 700 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles.

Mrs. Beatrice Stafford Grigsby, Box 203, Paintsville, Ky., wants word of her son, Jesse John Stafford Franklin, worked in Akron, Ohio, as John Stafford, for Goodyear Rubber Co., last heard of ten years ago.

Word wanted of Calvin William (Slim) Brown, once of Ranger, Texas. By Isaac Simmons, Bloom, Kansas.

Ralph Cornwall or Cornwell, formerly of "American Legion" in Canadian Army, transferred overseas to Intelligence service, reported caught in Germany and shot. Lately reported living in Texas or Oklahoma. Old buddy, Wayne G. Putnam, R.R. 3, Dayton, Ohio, would like word.

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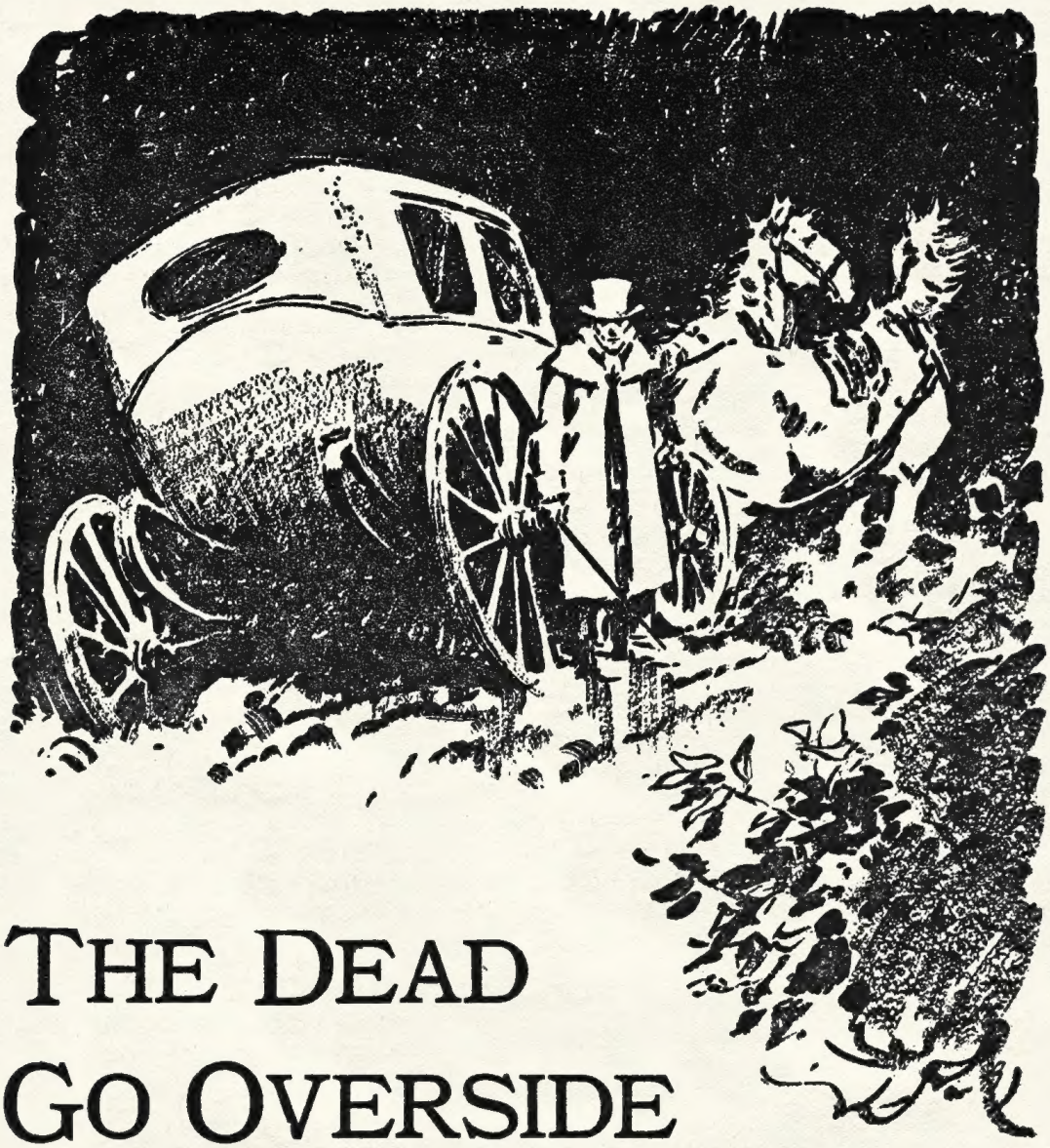

THE DEAD GO OVERSIDE

(Part One of Five)

By ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH

ABIJAH MAYO woke up this spring morning of 1820 under the same conditions which had attended his previous awakenings ashore during the years he had lived with his Aunt Tabitha and Uncle Ira in Provincetown—eight years, he realized, since his father had been lost in the *Defiance* privateer, trapped on a lee shore under the guns of a British frigate, and his mother had died of the "marsh-sickness" and a broken heart.

Eight happy, busy years. And now everything was suddenly different. He had made up his mind overnight.

A brisk racket of pots and pans from the kitchen was a familiar warning from Aunt Tabitha that it was time for slug-a-beds to stir their stumps, and he rolled his six feet of lean bone and muscle out of the covers.

In three minutes he had shaved, washed and combed his yellow hair, with the competence of a young man

"Stand, ye varmints!"

who was used to the confines of a coasting schooner's cabin. Then he pulled on his pants and the pair of cowhide half-boots from Boston, drew his best ruffled shirt over his head and carefully adjusted a brass-buttoned blue watch-coat to his broad shoulders. He aimed to look his best this morning.

The aroma of coffee, gingerbread, codfish balls and baked beans, which met

him at the kitchen door, would have been exciting ordinarily. Today he accepted it as a matter of course, as he did his aunt's sniff of greeting and the kiss she gave him, aware that her sharp eyes were probing his face. His uncle looked up from a week-old Boston paper with a grunt and glance as keen as Aunt Tabitha's. Well, time enough tc tell 'em later, after the *Sailor's Joy* had sailed.

"All dressed up, 'Bijah," commented his aunt, filling a plate for him with her usual celerity.

"Goin' to see off that 'tarnation Hiram Adams, ben't ye?" growled his uncle.

"No, sir," returned 'Bijah. "It's Lucy I'm seeing off."

His uncle grunted into a mug of coffee. 'Bijah gathered the idea of an uncomplimentary reference to Captain Adams, master of the trading brig *Sailor's Joy*. But there was nothing strange in that. Uncle Ira was a doughty subscriber to the Democratic cult in politics, which had swept the country under the spell of the "Virginia Dynasty" of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, the last of them currently occupying the White House. Captain Hiram, on the other hand, was one of the dwindling number of Federalists who subscribed to the doctrines of his Massachusetts namesake, John Quincy Adams.

The two old salts were perennial adversaries, their joint appearance in Cahoon's ordinary, across the street from the Custom House, a sure sign of a verbal brawl which never failed to delight their supporters. The only thing which bothered 'Bijah about their feud was its influence on Lucy and himself. Uncle Ira wasn't so bad, but Captain Adams—phew! His ears tingled at recollection of some of the recent remarks of Lucy's father to himself. And there'd be more on the wharf this morning, he was certain.

He pushed back his chair.

"Why, boy, you haven't more'n eaten a mouthful," protested Aunt Tabitha.

"Not hungry," mumbled 'Bijah.

"'Got a charter for the *Betsy Ann*," his uncle interposed. "Wellfleet for Baltimore, stock fish. Better be seeing to her, 'Bijah."

'Bijah barely tarried in the garden door.

"Yes, sir, talk to you later," he acknowledged, and hastened toward the street.

THE Adams house already had been boarded up. A couple of Captain Hiram's Portygee sailors were loading sea-gear and cabin provisions on a hand-truck. They waved to 'Bijah with white-toothed grins.

"Miss Lucy, she go for wharf," one of them hailed.

Rounding the ramshackle warehouse and sail-loft at the end of Adams' Wharf, 'Bijah saw Lucy. She was balanced on a stringpiece and bossing a whaleboat's crew, who were transferring the last of the luggage and stores.

He caught his breath. She hung there over the water as light as the gulls overhead. He had known many pretty girls in a score of coastwise ports during his brief life afloat, but none like Lucy.

The *Sailor's Joy*, almost as dainty as her mistress, lay off the inshore shoals riding to a taut cable, her upper sails loose, men swarming the yards. 'Bijah couldn't help admiring her.

There was a ship for you! No wonder Captain Hiram was intolerant of stay-at-home sailors like Uncle Ira, who were content with periodic excursions to the Newfoundland Banks or Georges, with occasional coasting voyages when a charter offered.

His gorge rose at the thought of another run with stockfish from Wellfleet to Baltimore. He was twenty years old. There were plenty of masters as young as himself in deep sea work. Anything for a change! A change and Lucy.

She stepped down from the string-

piece, her skirts fluttering around her trim ankles, her curls escaping from her plain bonnet as shiny and decorative as the glint of a blackbird's wing.

"Don't scowl, 'Bijah," she reproved him. "We're young yet."

"Yes, and it will be two years, maybe three, before you come home," he answered bitterly.

She put her hand on his arm, and her eyes, startlingly blue against the background of her dark beauty, met his with a soft honesty of appeal.

"We settled this last night," she said.

"You mean you settled it," he reminded her.

"But after all, I must think of father. He's old, 'Bijah, and lonely. He hasn't anyone but me. And now grandma's gone, I can't stop in Boston while he's away."

A foghorn voice roared behind 'Bijah.

"Well, well, here ye be! An offshore sailor bearin' down to watch proper sailormen venture the deep. Too bad ye ain't got more spunk into ye, 'Bijah. But mebbe someday ye'll git your measure of Bankin' and suchlike. Aye, mebbe someday ye'll grow enough whiskers to stand to a blizzard off the Horn. But not as long as ye let a sour-bellied Democrat like Ira Mayo dry-nuss ye."

'Bijah whirled, his craggy face a mask of anger. Captain Adams was stumping towards him, attended by Mr. Pettigrew, the Collector, Parson Gideon and a handful of old salts, the lot of them raucously amused.

HIRAM ADAMS was a little giant of a man, as broad as he was long, his face—as much of it as could be seen through a tangle of beard—tanned to the hue of horsehide.

'Bijah swallowed hard, conscious of the continued pressure of Lucy's hand on his sleeve. He was mad, but common sense told him her father was the best shipmaster on Cape Cod, a man whose trig brig was a familiar sight in every port in the world, from the Hanseatic cities of the Baltic to Nootka Sound in the Northwest and Calcutta and Canton. You might resent Hiram Adams, but you had to respect him.

"I'll make sure you don't have a chance to talk this way to me the next time we meet, sir," 'Bijah answered, keeping his tone under control.

"Blow me down for a greasy whaler," roared Lucy's father. "Mean to tell me ye'll risk deep water, boy?"

"Yes, and do as good a job as yourself."

"Ye talk like a packet-ship mate," scoffed Captain Hiram. "Take your hand off him, gal."

"I won't," said Lucy, and came closer to 'Bijah.

Captain Hiram's mottled features turned plum color.

"Mutiny, gal! Do as I bid ye. Stand back, 'Bijah, or I'll heave ye overside."

Parson Gideon coughed deprecatingly.

"Aren't you being unreasonable, Captain Hiram?" he admonished. "The young people are bidding each other farewell. Surely, we may condone a maidenly show of friendliness." And, as the irate skipper clenched his fist: "Come, come, my old friend, master your temper. 'Bijah is a worthy young man. He will miss Lucy no less than the rest of us."

Captain Hiram relaxed, but reluctantly.

"If the cub had whiskers, I'd pull 'em," he rasped. "My gal ain't goin' to marry a Banker. When the time comes she'll step up to ye, parson, with a young feller who can find his way acrosst the Atlantic, if no better."

"And his name will be Abijah Mayo," Lucy said softly.

Everyone laughed, and Captain Hiram contented himself with a growl that matched Captain Ira Mayo's.

"This is what comes of all this blasted Democratic talk," he complained in a

lower key. "Fust, Jefferson shuts us off the high seas. Then Madison gits us into a war that wipes out half our trade. And now this belly-scratcher Monroe does all he can to give the Britishers a chance to shut us out of every port they hold. I'm ag'in it! Federalists made this country, and wi'out Federalism we'll lose it." He frowned at 'Bijah. "Tell that to your uncle, boy. It's the likes of him tolerate the slavers, and would have seafarin' men content to ply offshore in soundin's."

"I won't tell him what isn't so," 'Bijah retorted sturdily. "And when you show off Long Point again, sir, I'll meet you with a deep sea master's certificate."

"Lucy, ye got that gear stowed?" barked Captain Hiram. "Git aboard, then. I'm aimin' to catch this wind. Parson, I won't forgit that silk stuff for your lady, nor the chiney dishes. Your sarvent, Pettigrew. Papers all in orders, I take it?"

"Everything is correct, Captain," the Collector assured him. "The best of luck to you."

"Yes, yes, may God bless and preserve you," echoed the parson. "Our prayers shall be with you always, Captain Hiram."

"Won't do no harm," Captain Hiram agreed sulkily. "Not in these days. Lucy, what did I bid ye?"

"In a moment, father," she answered.

She shook hands with the others, and then turned to 'Bijah.

"Wait for me," she whispered.

And for a fluttering instant her arms went around his neck, her lips pressed his for the first time. He was so dazed he was hardly capable of responding before she was gone, her eyes smiling mistily back at him as she leaped from the stringpiece to the waiting whaleboat. Her father gave 'Bijah a final glare.

"Milk-and-water sailor. Wait 'till ye find yourself afloat where ye can't lick bottom off a lead's tallow. That'll l'arn ye." He dropped beside Lucy, his voice bellowing a peremptory: "Cast loose that painter! Out oars! Give weigh! Sta'b'd a mite—that'll do."

It had happened so quickly that 'Bijah was unable to comprehend the definiteness of the parting. He took a step toward the wharf's edge. But already there was a boat's length of water between them. Captain Hiram, shipping the steering-sweep, bellowed a sardonic farewell:

"See ye in the Canton hongs, 'Bijah! A schooner's one thing, boy, but try to git the canvas off a square-rigger in a blow. Haw-haw-haw!"

It was evident that Captain Hiram was very pleased with himself. Old whiskered fool! And 'Bijah had to call on all his training to choke a round, salty oath, as Parson Gideon said comfortingly:

"I wouldn't take it too hard, my boy. Surely, if Lucy has given you her love—"

"I'm going to sea, I tell you," 'Bijah flared. "I expect he's right. Anyone can be a Banker. I'm going deep sea."

"Tut, tut, 'Bijah," objected the collector. "What would the port do without our fishermen? Remember, 'Bijah, the years pass. A year, two years, and we shall have Lucy with us once more. A voyage to the Indies is accounted nothing any more."

"I don't know whether I'm going to the Indies," snapped 'Bijah. "But I'm signing on the first ship out of New Bedford, even if she's a whaler, and I have to go in the foc'sle. I've done my stint for Uncle Ira. There are plenty of men here who'll take out the *Betsy Ann* for him."

And he stalked off.

CHAPTER II

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

AUNT TABITHA listened to 'Bijah's story in silence, her lips very tight, her eyes grave and searching. But there was no moderation in Uncle Ira's attitude.

Uncle Ira was as tall a man as his nephew, and his voice could have challenged Captain Adams'. He wasn't used to having his will brooked, and he indulged in a freedom of language which threatened to burst the limits of a lifetime's moderation. It was Aunt Tabitha who fetched him up short.

"I vum, Ira," she interrupted, "it 'most seems like you were charging the boy with something dishonorable."

"And ain't it dishonorable to abandon the family that brought ye up?" he roared. "Ain't it dishonorable, after I give 'Bijah workin' shares in the *Betsy Ann*, for him to leave me all on account of a passel of meanness hatched by Hiram Adams?"

"Well, if Hiram Adams knew the way you were taking on, I guess he would go into one of his haw-haw-haws," she cut him off sharply. "The point is, you haven't any right to stand in the way of 'Bijah's bettering himself, if that's his pleasure."

"Bettering himself," sputtered Uncle Ira. "I'd like to see how! Thar ain't a young feller in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has the beat of the chance I've given 'Bijah. And when I go it will all be his. Tell ye what," he offered, "jest ye say the word, and I'll give ye the *Betsy Ann* for a trading v'yage to the West Indies. Ye'll see the Havana, and Jamaica, and the Virgins, and Barbaders, and Curacao—go cl'ar to Rio, if ye've a mind to. Heh?"

'Bijah shook his head doggedly.

"Thank you kindly, Uncle Ira, but I'm aiming to prove I'm a sure-enough deep sea sailor. Captain Adams, he'd call a West Indies voyage no better than coasting. You know he would."

Uncle Ira's nodded grudging assent.

"I don't know what to say," he concluded.

"Why say more?" Aunt Tabitha challenged brusquely. "You've said too much, now. 'Bijah, are you set on starting off today?"

"If you don't mind, Aunt Tabitha. There's nothing to keep me here—except you two," he amended hastily.

"See you always feel like that." She dabbed at her eyes. "We'll miss you a sight more'n you fancy. But it isn't right for the elderly to stand in the path of youth."

Nobody spoke for a spell while the clock ticked, and the cat on the hearth purred contentedly. Uncle Ira cleared his throat.

"What about cash money, 'Bijah?" he suggested.

"Oh, I don't need for any," 'Bijah demurred. "You've paid me more than my share times past."

"Humph!" protested his uncle, stuffing a pipe. "If I wore ye, boy, I'd lay in new watch clothes for a long v'yage. Shirts 'n the like your aunt can fix for ye, hey, Tabitha?"

"In two shakes of a lamb's tail," she agreed, dry-eyed again—Aunt Tabitha was none of your women for grieving unduly, 'Bijah reflected. "And I'll put up some vittles for the road, too. Come along, 'Bijah, I'll help you pack."

UPSTAIRS, in his attic bedroom, Aunt Tabitha took 'Bijah's face in her worn hands.

" 'Bijah," she said, "I always knew from a little shaver the day would come, married or single, you'd want to prove yourself. Don't you ever regret it. Just be a good boy, and come home to us when you can. If Lucy comes home before you do, we'll keep her, never you fear, no matter what Hiram Adams sets himself to do." She gave him one of her swift pecks. "There, now. No sense in talking on like your uncle. Poor man, he means well."

And without giving him a chance to answer she started to toss out the contents of his cupboard.

"You'll have to be content with a bundle," she continued. "Carry it on

that marlin-spike—not that you're like to need weapons in these parts. This oil-skin for a rainy day, say. Four changes of underclothes and socks. And handkerchiefs. Yes, there's all you'll want. What about books?"

He ran his eyes over the shelves she and Parson Gideon had helped him stock. He was proud of his books.

"You can't take many," she reminded him.

He chose first a testament she had given him, knowing it would please her. Bowditch on navigation, of course. Last, he wavered between Shakespeare and Don Quixote, deciding for the Bard after riffling through the pages.

Down in the kitchen, they found Uncle Ira fishing under the works of the Concord clock.

"Say what ye like, 'Bijah," he grumbled, "I'll not see ye put out from Provincetown without I grease the ways for ye. "Here! 'Knowed I had something put by. Take this."

And he thrust on the boy a fat leather purse, which 'Bijah balanced doubtfully until his aunt peered out of the cold pantry.

"Take it, boy," she commanded. "It won't hurt you. I'm fixing a snack for you. There'll be houses along the way for you to sleep, but there's nothing to best a packet of bread-and-meat for the road. And the Lord knows I'll be put to it to use up the preserve shelves lacking you to feed." She fussed on while 'Bijah thanked his uncle bashfully: "Same as taking away a body's occupation. I vum it is. 'Had a boy 'round the house so long."

Presently, they stood with him on the doorstep. Uncle Ira squeezed his fingers. Aunt Tabitha pecked him decisively, wiping a tear from a button of his watch-coat.

"Good-by, 'Bijah. And be sure you write us before you sail. And don't go to talking Yankee fashion just because the men 'round you haven't had your upbringing. And say your prayers regular —praying never hurt any man."

"And don't ye give heed to cheap Federal talk, boy," advised Uncle Ira. "Allus mind ye're an American and a Democrat, hold to the country and the party and keep your dander up if a skipper figgers to bully ye."

'Bijah hesitated, teetering from foot to foot.

"God's sake, boy, git along!"

For the last time in his life, 'Bijah knew that helpless sensation of a small boy. He mustered a shaky good-by, and strode down the short path to Commercial Street with a very weak imitation of a swaggering sailorman embarking upon a great adventure. At the gate he waved to the old couple, settled his bag over his shoulder and swung inland from the harbor across the dunes to pick up the sandy road people still called the King's Highway.

AFTERWARD, he used to wonder if the eagerness would have returned to his step had he been able to foresee what the future held for him. But return it did. He was whistling when he topped a dune by East Harbor, and looking back at the sprawling little seaport, glimpsed afar off Long Point, beyond the harbor entrance, the white sails of the *Sailor's Joy* gleaming silvery on the blue expanse of the sea.

Heartache throttled him for a breath. With every fathom the brig ploughed on, with every step he took, there was so much more distance between Lucy and himself. But he pulled himself together by an effort, and brandished a fist at the brig.

"I'll show you, Hiram Adams," he muttered. "You're not the only master out of Provincetown."

And by the time he had reached the foot of the dune he was humming the air of "The High Barbarie". With the natural zest of youth he had put the

past behind him. The future was his meat, and he longed to consume it.

It was a gorgeous day, with a tang to the salt-sweetened air.

'Bijah kept to a steady gait, and the miles dropped astern almost imperceptibly. It was early afternoon when he came to Truro, apprised of its nearness while the woods shut him in by the rhythmic tinkling of sheep-bells. Soon farms began to pop up in the clearings, and orchards replaced the jade-green pines, their branches heavy with blossoms. The vast, hump-backed dunes rolled away from shore to shore, lolling in the sunlight like sleeping whales.

That night he slept in a farmhouse beyond Wellfleet. The family boasted connection with Uncle Ira, and refused to accept money for his lodging. Nothing was too good for a Mayo. They pressed him to break his journey for a few days, but he was afoot with the dawn. The road was more populated every hour, people passing to and fro between the little towns and ports, strings of pack-horses carrying merchandise from Boston.

EVERYONE wanted to talk, so 'Bijah did not make as good time as the day before. But he was twenty miles farther on his way when he heard a ghostly echo of music ahead, a ranting, merry, fiddling tune that drifted to his ears down the wooded corridor. The music fair got into his feet. He turned a patch of cedars, and came upon the musician standing facing him and the declining sun and fiddling away for dear life, body swaying and long legs jigging in time with the rhythm.

"Play for an audience, and ye'll catch one, I always say," the man greeted him.

The bow flashed in a final chord, and the fiddler snatched a battered sea-cap from his head and bowed to his knees in a gesture that held as much of mockery as graciousness. He was a lean, dark-eyed man, dressed in a queer combination of sailor's gear and landsman's faded finery, bottle-green tail-coat, patched yellow trousers and Wellington boots the worse for wear.

"Surprised, ain't ye, young gentleman?" he continued. "Well, it ain't everyone as can hear Lew Taney play the sun down on the King's Highway."

'Bijah laughed.

"Are you a sailor?" he asked.

"Yes and no. By trade I'm a sea-cook, and a master hand in the galley. Whiles I'm weary of the sea I walk the dry land, playing and working for food and lodging, or on a night like this sleeping out under the stars as becomes my mother's son."

"And what was she?" 'Bijah pressed him.

"She came out of the tents of Egypt —a gypsy, your people would call her. But my father was a Paumonok buck."

"An Indian!"

"Just that." He laughed on a high, wild note that reminded 'Bijah of his music. "A great combination! Red blood and the black Egyptian, although 'tis no wise black in the sense of the African strain."

"You must have wandered far," 'Bijah said enviously.

"Name me a famous port of all the seas I've not seen, and I'll give you my fiddle—which is to say the soul of me." He stepped closer. "But yourself is a wanderer by destiny, young sir. That is plain to me, who has the sight. Aye, and it is in my mind your wanderings are still before you."

"Are you in from the sea?" asked 'Bijah.

"No, I have loafed ashore the better part of a year, passing from Newburyport south as far as New York town—for which I had no liking—and back. And now I'm for sea again."

"So am I," 'Bijah said. "I am on my way to New Bedford to seek a ship."

"That would suit my needs," Lew

Taney replied promptly. "I'll tell ye, young sir, I am a man of sudden ways. I like a man or a ship, or I mislike 'em. Would it please ye if we kept company on the road together?"

Now, the like of this had never happened to 'Bijah before, and he wondered if there was some art-magic in the man which led him to answer without reflection:

"It would please me, if it would you, Lew Taney."

"Well and good," said Lew Taney. "I'll make a suggestion. No doubt ye were for seeking shelter for the night. It is my pleasure to sleep out when I can, as I have told ye. There was a bit of a lake around that bend. Let we drop down to the bank, and I'll whittle a shelter of branches for ye, and contrive a meal no housewife could better. And afterwards I'll fiddle for ye. Eh?"

'Bijah was delighted.

"I'm for it," he said. "There's much I'd ask you, for I know nothing but the coasting trade."

"Ask and ye'll be told," promised Lew. "What I can't find words for, my fiddle will bring to ye plain."

CHAPTER III

THE BOSTON CHAISE

THEY scrambled down the slope of the nearest dune to a tree-walled glade, carpeted with pine-needles and fronted by a shelving stretch of beach. Overhead the stars began to twinkle faintly, and the night wind sighed in the topmost cedars.

Lew Taney unslung a hefty pack, wrapped his fiddle in a piece of oiled-silk and produced a broad-bladed hunting-knife.

"Name me the tavern could offer us choicer lodging," he exclaimed. "There's a hen and a jack in my pack we'll broil sonsily, as the Scotch say. Never give supper a thought. That's my job."

In a quarter-hour a lean-to was constructed of branches heaped over a pair of bent saplings, and a fire was chasing shadows across the lakelet. Lew Taney squatted on his hunkers before the blaze, skinning and gutting his contributions with a deft skill which drew 'Bijah's admiration.

"The hen?" he replied casually to a question. "Oh, there was a sour-faced farmer Wellfleet way, who called me a limb of Satan and would have none of my fiddling, more by token his womenfolk fancied it. So I circled his yard and snatched myself the plumpest cackler of his flock. The jack I knocked over with a stick."

The meat he rubbed with leaves from a packet of herbs he carried, and salted thoroughly, then broiled it on sticks just out of range of the flames, catching the juice in tin pannikins. 'Bijah, without a thought to the perfection of his aunt's kitchen work, shamelessly vowed it was the best meal he'd ever eaten. Afterward, they sat and smoked their pipes and talked—or, rather, Lew talked, seldom requiring a question to keep his tongue oiled. And as he had promised, when he found himself at a loss for words, he took refuge in his fiddle.

"It was this I remember of Canton," he would say, drawing odd, twanging notes from the strings, which had the effect of invoking for 'Bijah visions of the vast, teeming, close-huddled city on the Hwang-ho: endless processions of bare-legged coolies in peaked straw-hats; gaudy-robed mandarins and their escorts; troops of slender sing-song girls in clinging silk, pale yellow fingers plucking at primitive instruments—and always, the rush and flow of the yellow river's turgid current, giver of life and death.

And the next moment he'd be describing the Gypsy gatherings on Epsom Downs in England, where the gentry raced their thoroughbreds, and his fiddle

would vault carelessly from themes of sorrow to a parody of throngs of people betting and stealing and swindling whoever was zany enough to be cozened by the Gypsy folk. Or he'd tell of a storm at sea, and his fiddle strings would throb to the pulse of the gale in the rigging, the confusion on the deck, the panic of the crew, the waves pounding like battering-guns, as 'Bijah often had heard them at Race Point behind Provincetown.

That was a night 'Bijah never forgot. It was near midnight when Lew tucked the fiddle regretfully away, and they lay down to sleep under the lean-to, their feet to the dying embers of the fire, their bellies full and 'Bijah's brain, for one, awhirl with more ideas than it had known in his twenty years.

They were awake with the dawn, however, and after a swim in the lakelet resumed their journey, 'Bijah content to set his pace to Lew's leisurely gait. For the Indian-Gypsy was always for stopping to gossip with every human who'd listen to him.

They lay that night in a wood outside Yarmouth Port, making a fine supper on fish Lew snagged from an inlet of the harbor. The next day was hazy, with an intermittent drizzle; but that did not daunt them, and at its worst Lew played them into shelter in a farmhouse where they might have bedded for the night had they heeded the persuasions of their hosts. Instead they pushed on to the edge of Sandwich, and slept warm in a deserted barn, supping amply on the food which had been forced upon them in leaving.

The third day of their comradeship was equally cheerless, yet they trudged on, 'Bijah in his oilskins and Lew wrapped in a tarpaulin, beneath which he cuddled his precious fiddle. They left the Cape at Bourne, and headed inland through a bleak and dreary country of scrub forest and cranberry bogs by way of Onset to Wareham.

THE road was deserted, houses were far apart and 'Bijah thought more than once how miserable he must have been had he been obliged to face it alone. But Lew's cheeriness was unabated. If he could not fiddle in the drizzle, that did not stop him from singing. He made the chill desolation bearable with his sonorous voice.

They had progressed several miles, the biting wind in their faces, heads bowed to it, when he broke off in the middle of a stave.

"Hark!" Lew cupped his ear, bending forward. 'Bijah did the same, and caught, faint on the blast, a confused clamor of outcries.

"Help! Help! He—"

"That," quoth Lew, "has the sound of thievery or murder. We'll run for

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it." He laughed on the high, eerie note which never failed to quicken 'Bijah's blood. "What a night for crime! And me itching for a bout!"

In a minute they had doubled a tongue of woodland, and found themselves confronted by a bulky object tilted on the edge of the ditch, a huddle of vague figures struggling around it.

"Post-chaise," grunted Lew. "Footpads." He raised his voice in a shout that breasted the howling of the wind. "Stand, ye varmints!"

The group of figures split apart as if a shell had burst in it. One toppled over, a second lurched against the side of the chaise, two sprang clear to meet the rescuers.

'Bijah glimpsed briefly a savage, bearded face. A knife glittered in his eyes, and he struck down instinctively with his marlin-spike. A howl of pain responded, and the knife whirled into the ditch.

Recovering position, 'Bijah would have struck again, but his antagonist sprang out of range, and pelted off into the woods, yelping curses.

Just across the road, Lew and the second footpad were rattling knife-blades together and clawing for a free-hand grip. 'Bijah acted as instinctively as he had before, swinging his oaken stave with all his strength against the hollow of the footpad's knees. The man toppled backward like an empty sack, completed a half-somersault and collapsed in a heap, his neck twisted at a hideous angle.

Lew swore lustily.

"Now, why did ye have to go and interfere?" he complained. "I'd have spilled his lights in a jiffy." Then he laughed, but this time naturally. "Well, well, ye couldn't know that. It was your fight, 'Bijah. For a raw younker, ye have the right promise." He stooped over the body while 'Bijah stared, fascinated. "Aye, aye, ye've broken his neck."

A VOICE spoke uncertainly from the shadows surrounding the chaise.

"How can I thank you?"

Both 'Bijah and Lew turned in their tracks at the interruption. A small old man, his shriveled body draped in a black cloak, was clutching a wheel-spoke, his gaunt features very white under a beaver hat. He had a large nose; his brown eyes were at once melancholy and wise. In his right hand he clutched a naked sword-cane.

"Permit me that I introduce myself," he went on, speaking with an accent 'Bijah recognized as Portuguese, but of a culture unfamiliar to the New Englander. "I am Senhor Paul Da Souza, supercargo of the schooner *Diana,* of New Bedford."

"Lew Taney, sea-cook, tinker and fiddler by persuasion," returned the Gypsy-Indian. "And this here is Captain 'Bijah Mayo of Provincetown. We're pleased to have been of sarvice, Senhor." The horses were stamping uneasily. A shape lying almost under the hoofs of the near one groaned and rolled a bloody head in the mud. "Your driver hurt, eh? I'll see what I can do for him, and straighten out the team."

"That will be most courteous," Da Souza acknowledged.

'Bijah, somewhat embarrassed by the title Lew had conferred on him, inquired diffidently:

"Can I help you, Senhor Da Souza?"

"If I may trespass upon you further, sir. That scoundrel you dealt with so handily, I would make sure he was what I thought him."

Leaning heavily on 'Bijah's arm, he crossed the road to the man with the broken neck. Contemptuously, he revolved the battered head with his sword-point, and stooped to scrutinize it.

"I was right," he said. "It is the sailor Pete. You must know, Senhor Captain, the two you encountered were discharged members of the *Diana's* crew.

Undoubtedly, they had heard I was returning from Boston with a quantity of silver for the schooner's trading-chest. Heh, let me be sure it is safe!"

They returned to the chaise, and he fumbled at a valise on the floor.

"Thanks to the Virgin," he cried piously. "In the turmoil there was no knowing. Ah, Senhor Captain, how greatly am I in your debt! And not only I, but Captain Stanford."

"We were glad to be of help, sir," 'Bijah answered awkwardly. "What shall we do with the dead man?"

"That carrion! Paugh!" Da Souza sheathed his blade, and tossed it into the chaise. "Leave him where he lies. He had a bad name in the port. The town authorities will think themselves fortunate to find him dead. They will believe his neck was broken in drink."

'Bijah shivered. After all, it was the first time he had caused the death of a man, and scoundrel or no, he was not any too happy about it. He was glad to hear a call for help from Lew.

"Give me a hand with this postilion. He's knocked silly. We'll have to put him inside—if ye don't mind, Senhor."

"If it is necessary," Da Souza returned indifferently. "But how then shall we proceed? It is necessary that I reach New Bedford so soon as possible."

"Don't ye worry," Lew assured him. "I can manage hosses as easy as galley-pots. There's room for three in the chaise, and I'll ride postilion."

Between them, they propped the unconscious driver into the far corner of the vehicle.

"'Git our gear stowed, 'Bijah?" remarked Lew. "Aye, aye, then. We'll make sail. Climb in with Senhor Da Souza."

'BIJAH assisted the old Portuguese into the chaise, and sat gingerly next to the inert postilion, who was breathing stertorously. Lew slammed the door shut after them.

"Ready—hup!" The Indian-Gypsy vaulted into saddle, and the horses broke into a trot, the clumsy vehicle bumping and swaying over the rutted road. A strange conclusion to his journey, 'Bijah ruminated, but not so much stranger than the interlude with Lew which had preceded it.

Da Souza laid a blue-veined hand upon his knee.

"You reflect, Captain Mayo? That is a worthy quality for one so young. You *are* very young to be a ship's master."

"Only in coasting, sir," 'Bijah admitted.

"That is of no consequence. I have been amazed by your courage and efficiency. As it happens, Captain Stanford lacks a second mate for our voyage, and if you would not consider such a position beneath your merits I should be glad to recommend you to him."

'Bijah was stunned. Was his good fortune to come so easily?

"Why—if it's a deep sea voyage, sir. I'm finished with coasting."

Da Souza smiled thinly.

"It is to Africa," he said. "I can promise you—and your friend—all the adventures you crave and a profit beyond the ordinary."

"Yes, I'd like that," exclaimed 'Bijah. "I'd like that fine. But Captain Stanford—will he—"

"Captain Stanford will make no difficulty, I am sure, after I have told him what you have done."

"Then I thank you, Senhor Da Souza," 'Bijah answered eagerly. "That's what I want, sir, deep sea training."

"You shall have it. And now, if you please, I will sleep. There is much for me to do before we sail."

He closed his eyes, and 'Bijah sat there, between him an the inert postilion, while the chaise lumbered through the night. The rain drummed on the roof. The wind whistled and whined.

But 'Bijah was barely conscious of the intensity of the storm. He was thinking ahead—of the *Diana*, of Captain Stanford, of all he had learned from his Bowditch of the trade winds and the doldrums on the Equator, of the steamy African jungles.

CHAPTER III

LION OF THE *Diana*

IT WAS nearly midnight before the chaise reached Fairhaven, and another hour was required to rouse the ferrymen and cross the harbor. New Bedford was pitch dark, even along the waterfront, but Lew Taney was familiar with its crooked streets. Da Souza instructed him to drive to the Commodore Porter Tavern, and he urged his winded team to a last effort and drove into the tavern yard with a battering of hoofs and creaking of wheels that roused the sleepy hostlers as readily as his shout of: "House, ho!"

Da Souza demanded food and drink for 'Bijah and Lew and the best rooms in the house.

"Here, you are my guests," he insisted. "Holy Virgin, it is nothing! What do I not owe you for this night's work? Nor is that the only reason why I should entertain you. Captain Stanford is particular about his crew. He will be grateful to me for recruiting him a second mate and a cook who can be trusted."

"When shall we see him?" asked 'Bijah.

"In the morning, Senhor." The thin smile once more twisted the lips of the Portuguese. "Do not be impatient. If the weather clears and all goes well we shall sail within the two days."

'Bijah waked—it seemed to him in less than the period of a watch off-duty—in response to the knocking of a pot-boy, who informed him that Da Souza was awaiting him in the private parlor. A glance out the window told him the storm had blown itself out. The crowded harbor was so clearly visible he might have been surveying it through a spy-glass. A hundred sail and more rode at anchor or were berthed at the wharves: stubby whalers, lordly Indiamen, clipper-built packets, battered coasters. Half a dozen nations were represented, but the majority of vessels floated the Stars and Stripes.

Downstairs the pot-boy directed him to a room at the end of a passage off the ordinary. Its door was ajar, and he could not help overhearing the voice which was speaking, a voice so vibrant with vitality that its lowest undertones were as audible as the average man's normal utterance.

"—Gypsy will do. A dependable rascal. But this boy, Paul, he's young for the job—comes of a good God-fearing family. I don't—"

'Bijah scuffed his feet, and hoped his cheeks weren't ruddied as he knocked.

"Come in," the same voice directed.

Da Souza was sitting at a table laid for breakfast. The man who had been speaking stood in front of the fireplace, a cigarro in his mouth. He was smartly dressed, more like a naval officer than a merchant skipper. He had a swart complexion, black hair that curled crisply to his scalp, a delicately chiseled nose and a jaw that jutted out like the prow of a 74. But it was his eyes that riveted 'Bijah's attention. They were as blue and cold as the water on the Newfoundland banks when the icebergs came wallowing south from the Greenland glaciers.

Then, without warning, those eyes became human. The man took a step toward him. The hard features relaxed in a pleasant smile. Impressions stabbed lightning swift through 'Bijah's mind—Why, he isn't so bad! Not so big, either. But he is, too! Glory, he's as tall, and he's heftier in the build. Look at those

"Tol' ye he was a bucko!"

shoulders! And I'd have sworn I had two-three inches on him.

It was to be several days before 'Bijah realized that the master of the *Diana* was gifted with a body so perfectly proportioned that his great size was never evident except in actual contrast with other men.

"SO THIS is Mr. Mayo!" The voice had lost its crisp incisiveness. It was a pleasant, mellow tenor, matching in warmth the changed expression of the eyes. "Mr. Mayo, I am Lion Stanford. I cannot tell you how deeply I appreciate the spunk you showed in coming to the rescue of my old friend. The money doesn't mean so much, although Paul thinks it does. I'd rather lose my schooner—almost—than Paul."

He offered a hand, and when 'Bijah returned the clasp he knew that he had never felt a sterner grip.

"Sit down." Captain Stanford motioned to a chair at the table. "I have eaten. So has your Gypsy ally. He has gone to have a look at the *Diana*. But Paul has waited for you."

'Bijah was at a loss for words, so contented himself with a "Thank you, sir."

"Tell me about yourself," continued Stanford. "Are you, by any chance, a son of Captain Elihu Mayo, of the *Defiance* privateer?"

"Yes, sir, he was my father."

"Ah, that explains you, Mr. Mayo. Such a father, such a son. I remember him well. A very gallant seaman." He motioned again to the chair. "Please sit down and eat. You are young enough to have an appetite, epecially after last night."

Da Souza smiled an endorsement of the invitation, and lifted the lids from several platters.

"Fish, young sir?" he suggested. "Or eggs? Bacon? Broiled kidneys? What you will. I have taken the liberty of speaking of you to Captain Stanford. He was disposed to think you might be too young for a voyage as difficult as the *Diana's*. And there is the crew. Hard men, sir. We choose them for recklessness and fighting ability. Africa is a dangerous land."

'Bijah finished heaping his plate before he looked from one to the other of his inquisitors.

"I killed one of your former hands last night, Captain Stanford," he said levelly.

Stanford's features remained an immobile mask, but a shadow flickered over them. He nodded thoughtfully.

"A good answer," he admitted. "What

do you know about the South Atlantic?"

"Nothing but what I have learned out of Bowditch."

"How would follow your easting after you had lost the northerly trades?"

'Bijah put down knife and fork and recited Bowditch's formula, with its possible alternatives.

Captain Stanford nodded again.

"Go ahead with your meal, young feller. Give him some coffee, Paul. Now, can you figure out for me the course you would steer—"

And he outlined rapidly a problem in navigation, primary in 'Bijah's estimation. The New Englander solved it in his head.

"Sound," Stanford affirmed. "What can you tell me about African coastal conditions?"

"Nothing, except that I'd never run inshore without a trustworthy native pilot or a leadsman ahead in a small-boat."

Stanford puffed at his cigarro, and regarded the ash contemplatively.

"Mind fighting?" he challenged. "Dirty fighting? When, if you lose, you'll be lucky to be butchered for the stewpot instead of tortured?"

"I don't think so."

"I didn't mean to infer you might be afraid of it," Stanford explained. "Humph! Good Christian, I suppose?"

'Bijah laughed.

"I'm a born Cape Codder," he reminded the *Diana's* master.

"And I'm a State of Maine man," Stanford retorted, with an answering smile. "Doesn't signify, really, you know." He patted Da Souza's shoulder. "You win, Paul," he said. "Damn it, man, you have a shrewd eye. All right, Mr. Mayo, if you're not too particular—"

He stopped delicately, and 'Bijah, taking this for a hint that he might withdraw from the venture at the last moment, protested:

"I may be only twenty, sir, but I've had a heap of experience. I wouldn't say I was particular."

The warmth died out of the blue eyes.

"Very good, then. We'll sign you on. You'll have your bonus in addition to wages, and a percentage of the net profits of the voyage. But I must warn you we're a close-mouthed lot. We don't encourage questions. As for the crew, we hold 'em on a tight rein. Have to. They're scum. But they're willing to risk fever and spears and—"

He stopped again to relight his cigarro, ostensibly.

"Paul and I do the thinking and planning," he ended. "And if you sign on with us, you do exactly what we tell you to. Understood?"

"Yes, sir," 'Bijah agreed happily.

The warmth returned to the probing blue eyes.

"I think you'll do, young feller. When you've finished your breakfast we'll shift your gear aboard. While Paul was in Boston we got the last of the cargo stowed. Today we're loading water and stores. We'll sail tomorrow with the ebb."

THERE was further desultory conversation, both Stanford and Da Souza being at pains to include him in it. He learned that the *Diana's* cargo consisted mainly of rum, cotton cloth and what Stanford termed "gewgaws and knick-knacks", and that her destination in Africa was a Portuguese factory at the mouth of the Aimani river, Fort San Sebastian. He heard mention of a native chief, B'Goma Nandi, who was evidently a very capricious potentate, and of a Portuguese official, Don José da Costa, who appeared to be a slippery rascal. It all sounded very exciting. Once or twice his companions lapsed into rapid exchanges of Portuguese which meant nothing to him. But he didn't mind, and accepted readily an off-hand apol-

ogy from Stanford—"Paul doesn't always understand English as well as he thinks he does, particularly where finances are concerned."

"How strange if I did," Da Souza commented sardonically. "The blessed Virgin knows—"

"Oh, to hell with your religion, Paul," scoffed Stanford.

The melancholy eyes of the Portuguese froze into chips of agate.

"On that score, my Lion, we have an understanding," he said softly.

There was an interval of silence in which 'Bijah sensed a dynamic conflict of personal forces. Stanford broke it, throwing his smoking cigarro into the fireplace.

"No offense, old friend," he apologized bluffly. "You know my prejudices."

'Bijah was astonished. He hadn't thought to see Lion Stanford cry small for any man. And to this rack of bones, Da Souza, who seemed so gentle, so feeble!

But he forgot the incident when they reached Higgins' wharf, and spars loomed loftily against the harbor glare, and Captain Stanford said, with a throb in his voice such as a man permits when he speaks of a woman beloved:

"There she is—my *Diana!*"

THE schooner was bigger than 'Bijah had anticipated, a good four hundred tons. Her hull was painted black, with a yellow band. Her bulwarks were high and massively built, pierced for five twelve-pound carronades a side with an eighteen-pound Long Tom shrouded in tarpaulin on the foc'sle. Her spars, soaring higher than any neighboring craft's, were raked at a skittish angle, and her hull was molded artfully for speed, high in the sheer, sharp in the cutwater.

"She's a beauty," he cried. "But she might be a man-o'-war, a privateer."

"She was built for one," Stanford rejoined. "She's taken her dose of iron."

"Do you need all those guns?" 'Bijah asked curiously.

Stanford laughed shortly, exchanging a glance with Da Souza which 'Bijah missed.

"There are occasions on the African coast when a battery comes in handy," he answered dryly. "And there are still pirates in the West Indies, young feller. But come aboard."

He vaulted the bulwarks, and reached up to lower Dr Souza after him without so much as a grunt. 'Bijah dropped beside them. Although the deck was cluttered with stores and water barrels, 'Bijah's trained eye appreciated at once how clean and orderly everything was kept. The sailors working at the afterhatch were a villainous lot in outward appearance, but the leathery, squinty-eyed man who was supervising them never had to shout an order—a quirk of his hand was sufficient indication of what he wanted done.

"Mr. Wells," called Stanford.

The little man pottered over to them.

"This is Mr. Mayo, our second mate. Mr. Wells is our first, Mr. Mayo. We'll let Mr. Mayo have the day to get accustomed to the schooner. He'll take his watch tomorrow."

"Aye, aye, sir."

And Mr. Wells pottered back to his job.

"That's Barak Wells for you," Stanford grinned amusedly. "Few words, but he does what he's told to do. Come below with me. I'll show you your cabin."

'Bijah was frankly awed by the magnificence of the officers' quarters. Four staterooms opened off the central companionway, the for'ard one, port side, being assigned to him—a palatial abode compared to the best the *Betsy Ann* had afforded. The main cabin was as commodious as his aunt's kitchen, with a central table and chairs, a long settee under the stern-windows, pictures on the bulkheads, bookcases filled with a

taste which surprised him and a glittering arms-rack around the butt of the mainmast.

"Make yourself at home," said Stanford. "Stay aboard or go ashore. If you want anything, ask Wells. I'll be busy until evening." He started up the companionway. "Oh, by the way, you'll need more gear—whites and that sort of thing—for the tropics. If you want to draw advance wages—"

"No need for that, thank you, sir," 'Bijah interrupted, a trifle arrogantly.

Stanford smiled coldly.

"You'll do, young feller," he repeated.

Having stowed the contents of his bundle and assured himself that the captain and Da Souza had gone ashore, 'Bijah sought the galley, a deckhouse of generous proportions immediately aft of the foremast. Lew Taney was sitting on a table, talking with a hairy giant of a man, a man so tall that he was obliged to keep his head bent while he munched a handful of bread and meat. Lew slid to the floor as 'Bijah entered.

"It's Mr. Mayo," he exclaimed, twinkling. "Make ye acquainted with Black Barnaby, sir. Mr. Mayo's our new second mate, bosun. An old friend of mine, if I might make bold to say so."

The bosun ducked respectfully, scraped one foot in approved Navy fashion and tugged a forelock. "Sarvant, sir. Allus ready to oblige. Must be after them blarsted swabs in the forepeak, sir."

And he ducked out the door with another tug at his forelock.

"Keep your eye on Black Barnaby," counseled the Indian-Gypsy. "A Limey, but he's the only man aboard I'd have any use for, unless its that little pest, Peletiah Ramos—he's the cabin-boy. The rest of the crew—"

He spat expressively over the doorsill.

"How do you like Captain Stanford?" challenged 'Bijah.

"Him?" Lew reflected, glanced around cautiously and lowered his voice. "If he's as mum as his hands—Humph! A fine seaman beyond a doubt. But I'll give ye a tip, 'Bije: he's a killer."

"A killer?"

"So much I had out of Barnaby, and he says he had it from the cabin-boy, who's a keen whelp. Stanford was put out of a school called Harvard—it's nigh Boston—when he was a lad, on suspicion of doing in his roommate and best friend. No proof, ye understand, but there was a bad smell to it.

"That's pleasant to know," was all 'Bijah could think of to say. "He's a hard one. I could see that."

"I'll not dispute ye," agreed Lew. "And whatever happens, I'll wager my fiddle this won't be a tame voyage. There's something in the air—Well, we'll know more before we're through. But anyways, there's you'n me, and we'll stick together. The second mate and the cook. That's a rare team."

His toothy grin uplifted 'Bijah's sinking heart. Lion Stanford a killer. But why not? Hadn't he, Abijah Mayo, law-abiding New Englander, killed a man within the last twenty-four hours?

'BIJAH shot out of his bunk, wide awake, in response to the tap at his open door. The early sunlight pouring down the hatchway framed a wizened face and two shoe-button eyes peering intently at him through a tangle of lank black hair. It was the face of a precociously shrewd man of uncertain age. The body below it might have belonged to a twelve-year-old boy.

"Cap'n Stanford's compliments, and the ebb is makin'," this individual stated cavalierly, and would have departed as cavalierly if 'Bijah hadn't extended a long arm and yanked him back by the collar.

"You say 'sir' when you speak to the second mate," 'Bijah instructed him.

His prisoner wiggled vainly.

"Your health, Mr. Satan!"

"Yes, Mr. Mayo—ouch!—sir," wizened face capitulated.

"Are you the cabinboy?"

"That's me, Peletiah Ramos—ouch!—sir. Damn my eyes for a crimped 'tater-digger, but ye got a power of strength!" The wizened features crinkled in an impish grin. "Ye'll need it aboard this hooker. We're a tough crew."

"Don't worry about that," 'Bijah said, releasing him. "Why haven't I seen you before?"

"Oh, I was drunker 'n any two foremast hands last night." Peletiah swaggered. "I allus has a blow-off jest before a v'yage. Ain't a man on the waterfront can hold more licker 'n me, 'less it's Cap'n Stanford."

"How old are you?" demanded 'Bijah, pulling on his pants.

"Oh, I wasn't born yesterday," Peletiah boasted. And added hastily as 'Bijah rose: "Sir. Blast me, but ye're a big feller!"

'Bijah frowned at him.

"I'm seventeen, near as I can figger," Peletiah supplemented.

"This isn't your first voyage?"

"I been five years with Cap'n Stanford. Ain't nobody can manage him like me when he has his spells."

"His spells?" repeated 'Bijah.

The wizened features grinned knowingly again.

"Ye'll see for yourself, Mr. Mayo."

"Do you call that an answer?" snapped 'Bijah.

Peletiah's expression became suddenly serious.

"Mr. Mayo, sir," he said, "we ain't s'posed to answer questions on this schooner. It ain't healthy. Keep your belly-hatch closed, that's Cap'n Stanford's rule. Ye'll see for yourself. Aye," he concluded darkly, "ye'll see plenty."

He started to ascend the companionway stairs, then returned to stick his tousled head in the door.

"There's coffee 'n rum on the cabin table. And say, Mr. Mayo, I like ye fine. Never ye fear, we'll git along, we will."

"I'll take a rope's-end to you, if we don't," promised 'Bijah.

Peletiah cackled shrilly.

"Oh, no, ye won't. Fust-off, 'cause ye won't want to, and second-off, 'cause only Cap'n Stanford licks me. That's another rule of his'n."

He was gone before 'Bijah could answer him, as enigmatic a personality as the other members of the *Diana's* crew: Stanford and Da Souza, Black Barnaby and the cut-throat foc'sle hands —a score or more of Americans of the lowest type, Irishmen, Liverpool cockneys and Portuguese, whose aloofness and studiedly reckless bearing suggested a group of men bound together by ties of mutual rapacity and fear.

Gulping a cup of scalding coffee in the cabin, 'Bijah was aware of an indefinable impression of some vague influence, at once mysterious and sinister, which dominated the schooner's company; but his concern over it was inspired by curiosity rather than anxiety. He had no personal misgivings for the future. He simply wanted to know the mainsprings of conduct with which he would have to reckon, and he dismissed all speculations when the increasing bustle overhead warned him the schooner was about to loose her moorings.

ON DECK he found that Black Barnaby already had the jibs bent, and the foresail unstopped with a squad of sailors waiting by the halyards, all of them red-eyed from a last carouse, but on their feet and competent as an ordinary crew would not have been.

"'Ope I sees 'ee well, Mr. Mayo," Barnaby greeted him. "I knows as 'ow 'ee wasn't playin' toss-pot last night."

"I wish the rest of you were as well," scowled 'Bijah, conscious of the covert stares of the crew and resolved to start hazing before they did. "You over there, with the cut on your jaw, stand clear of that coil. If you catch your dirty foot in it I'll let you ride headdown to the fore-peak. You in the bandana, jump ashore and stand by the mooring."

They obeyed him with alacrity, and his sharp ear caught a murmur at his back:

"Tol' ye he was a bucko! Aye, the Old Man wouldn't tyke a milk-sop, not with us, Saul."

Black Barnaby was beaming on him. Yes, this was the way to handle the *Diana's* crew—ride 'em, drive 'em.

Captain Stanford hailed from aft:

"Ready for'ard, Mr. Mayo?"

"Ready it is, sir."

"Cast off, then."

'Bijah gave the word; the cable came hurtling over the side and Bandana vaulted after it. The tide sucked at the schooner's bow, and she commenced to edge away from the wharf. The stern-line was dropped, and Captain Stanford hailed again:

"We'll have the headsails on her, Mr. Mayo."

"Aye, aye, sir! Man those halyards—lively, men. Get your backs into it you toss-pots!"

They responded, their grunts setting a rhythm to their efforts. But something was wrong, 'Bijah felt, and in a moment he knew what he missed. Not a man raised his voice in song or jest or recrimination of his mates. It was the first time 'Bijah had known sailors to go to sea in a mood of sullen competence, and the sensation disturbed him. He was relieved to hear Captain Stanford's commands to hoist fore and mains'ls, and kept the men hopping with a crackling series of orders.

Free of the wharf, divorced from bondage to the land, the *Diana* became a living thing, gliding with the current but not dependent on it, sensitive to the least pressure on the wheel and the efficiency with which her towering canvas was trimmed. New Bedford receded rapidly astern, the green tongue of Sconticut Neck faded into the heat haze to port, the *Diana's* helm was put over and she went about on the starboard tack for the run out of Buzzard's Bay, the waves slapping at her cutwater.

For a brief instant 'Bijah forgot his puzzlement over the situation on board. At last he was a deep sea sailor. The broad Atlantic beckoned him. Come good, come ill, he'd return home knowing more than when he had left. As he had written the night before:

> I sail tomorrow A. M., second mate in the schooner *Diana*, four hundred tons burthen, on a trading voyage to the West Coast of Africa. Captain Stanford tells me he remembers my father. He has been most kind to take me, since such a voyage entails risks of danger at the hands of the savages. I am sanguine, however, that all will go well, and Captain Hiram will be compelled to admit I know my navigation beyound soundings.

PELETIAH'S shriveled figure appeared at his elbow, proffering a glass of tawny liquor.

"Cap'n Stanford's compliments, Mr. Mayo—*sir!*— and will ye be pleased to drink a toast wi' him to a pros'prous v'yage?"

'Bijah eyed the glass distastefully.

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"Aye, it's rum," Peletiah confided *sotto voce*. "Prime Demerara. If I was ye, I'd down it. 'Twon't do ye no harm."

Turning aft, 'Bijah saw the captain and Da Souza with glasses raised. He accepted the drink, and tossed it off at a gulp, manfully restraining the cough that tickled his throat.

Peletiah took the glass from his limp fingers.

"Ater the cap'n goes below," the cabinboy whispered, "I'll fetch ye a mess of scoff from the galley. Ye'll feel fine. Damn my eyes, Mr. Mayo, ye jest got to learn to swig your rum aboard the *Diana*. There's times—Aye, aye, sir, I'm comin'." He pretended to drop something, and stooped to retrieve it. "Stay clear of the cabin," he whispered. "Cap'n Stanford allus takes on bad at the start of a v'yage."

'Bijah followed the boy aft, his wits in a stew. Da Souza was sitting on the cabin hatch, absorbed in a small black book. Stanford stood at the head of the stairs, his body tense, beads of sweat on his tanned forehead.

"Do you know these waters?" he demanded, with a hint of impatience.

"I studied the charts last night, sir," 'Bijah answered truthfully.

"I saw you did. Navigation is a simple matter hereabouts. After you sink Long Island the course will be south in the usual coasting lanes for Charleston."

"For Charleston?" gaped 'Bijah.

The veins in Stanford's temples swelled.

"I'm not accustomed to having my orders questioned, Mr. Mayo," he said furiously. And then as abruptly he mustered a smile. "I'm tired, young feller. 'Must slack off. If you want advice, ask Paul, here. He's a better sailor than many a skipper. Understood? Right!"

He vanished down the hatch, his voice booming presently:

"Peletiah! Hustle, boy! No, take that food away."

More than a little shaken, the fumes of rum seething in his head, 'Bijah managed to pull himself together, walked over to the binnacle, estimated the course and studied the sails to make sure all were drawing full.

"Keep your eye on the main-peak," he said mechanically to the helmsman, a beetle-browed Irishman, who gave him a grudging acknowledgment: "Eye on the main-peak it is, sir."

Da Souza glanced up from the book he was conning.

"Could I have a word with you, Mr. Mayo?"

When 'Bijah joined him he rose and led the way to the weather side, out of hearing of the man at the wheel.

"I have no desire to be intrusive," he said, "but I perceive you have been upset by Captain Stanford's manner." He coughed deprecatingly. "In such moments as the present I advise you to avoid him."

'Bijah flushed.

"I'm not afraid—"

Da Souza held up a thin hand. "I do not speak of fear, but of reasonableness. There are times when Captain Stanford is master of the *Diana*, but not of himself. At those times leave him to me—and the boy Peletiah. Your duties will be most important. Mr. Wells is a good officer, but he has not the strength to exert authority. That will be your responsibility, young as you are."

He sighed, his brown eyes softly melancholy.

"It may be you will not be pleased with me some day, but we will not talk of that. In this world, Mr. Mayo, we take what we must. The good God only can judge us if we have done worse or what cannot be helped." He reopened his book, which 'Bijah saw was in Latin. "And now if you will excuse me, I will return to my devotions."

He sank on the breech of a carronade, with a gesture of dismissal, and 'Bijah took to tramping the lee side of the

quarterdeck, inhaling deep breaths of cool sea air to blow the Demerara from his brain. He was glad when Peletiah came aft with a tidy tray for him: more coffee, a dish of fresh beef and beans, soft bread and apple pie.

"I didn't forgit ye, Mr. Mayo," the urchin announced proudly. "'Knowed ye must be hungry. And Lew, he said to tell ye to bear down on this shore food 'cause there won't be none left in a day or two." He propped the tray on the hatch conveniently, admiring his handiwork. "If ye want more I'll be along to fetch it for ye, sir."

ABOUT noon Da Souza went below, and 'Bijah, from the cabin hatch heard, as distinctly as he had in the Commodore Porter, Stanford's vibrant voice.

"How's the youngster getting on, Paul?"

The supercargo's response was inaudible, but not so Stanford's comment.

"I can tell without seeing he's keep a true course, but the men—"

'Bijah moved away as Peletiah came on deck with a couple of empty bottles which he tossed overside.

"There's dead ones for ye," the boy muttered sourly. He noticed 'Bijah watching him, and his perky face relapsed into one of his impish grins. "Ye know a ship, Mr. Mayo, that ye do. Ain't she the lovely wench?"

He stamped his bare foot on the deck.

"She can dance with the best," 'Bijah agreed, laughing.

Peletiah came closer to him.

"Don't ye be frighted, sir," he said confidentially. "Another bottle, and he'll be into one of his mad spells."

"Why should I be frightened?" 'Bijah retorted, half amused.

The cabin-boy crossed himself, and no gesture he could have made would have been more impressive.

"There won't be a man on the schooner not frightened when he gits to talking with the devil and all his ghosts."

"What ghosts?" 'Bijah demanded.

"Them he killed. And the song—Ah, it's me should be used to it long since; but there'll be nights comin' I'll dream of it and wake with the sweat cold on me. Ye'll see, Mr. Mayo, sir, and don't ye come below, no matter what ye hear."

'Bijah stared after the ridiculous figure, and despite himself he shivered in the sun's warmth.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVIL AND CAPTAIN STANFORD

AT noon 'Bijah took a perfunctory observation, using his watch instead of a chronometer and a sextant racked to the cabin hatch. It was a matter of form, really; he was approximately certain of his position. The last of the Elizabeths had been left astern. The schooner was footing it nimbly for the open sea, Nantucket and the speck of No Man's Land somewhere out of sight to port, Block Island over the starboard horizon.

Occasionally, Stanford's voice vibrated from the cabin, but there was nothing violent in its tones. He seemed to be conversing sporadically, either with Da Souza, Peletiah or himself. But as the afternoon advanced 'Bijah detected a growing tensity in the conduct of the watch on deck. The men who took the wheel in succession were faithful in their duty, yet they were continually wetting their lips, cocking their ears attentively.

Once, too, Lew stepped from the galley, carrying his fiddle, but after a word with Black Barnaby he retired inside, and when he reappeared, empty-handed, it was to sit on the door-sill, sucking at his pipe for diversion. Hungry for a friendly word, 'Bijah elected this for an excuse to abandon the quarter-deck for a brief tour of inspection, concluding with the galley.

"Everything all right, Lew?" he asked.

"Right as can be, sir," the cook rejoined for the benefit of ears within reach. And following him inside, added: "Aye, right here in the galley, but I never seed a crew as scary as these cutthroats. What's wrong?"

"The captain's on a drunk," 'Bijah answered, and repeated Peletiah's warning.

Lew whistled low.

"So that's how the wind sets! Well, if the devil comes aboard and makes any trouble for ye, remember Lew Taney'll be ready with a kettle of hot water or whatever's convenient. I've handled crazy men afore this."

"But it isn't only the skipper they're afraid of," objected 'Bijah. "There's something else wrong, something that everyone is afraid of. Don't you feel it?"

Lew nodded soberly.

"There's been black deeds done in this craft. There ain't a man aboard hasn't felt the shadow of the gallows cold on his neck. That old Portygee, Da Souza, he's done things in his time. And Black Barnaby, he's served in King's ships and East Indiamen. Ye can't tell me a Limey like him would be in a Yankee trader 'less'n there was reason why England wasn't healthy for him."

"Yes, but what? What does it all mean?" persisted 'Bijah.

"They'll none of 'em talk, not even Peletiah. Speak of the past, and they clam up on ye."

A sailor scuttled past the door, glancing fearfully over his shoulder.

"The skipper must have started something," exclaimed 'Bijah. "I'll get aft. Stand by, Lew. I may need you."

OUTSIDE the galley 'Bijah paused for a swift survey of the deck. Aft, there was only the man at the wheel. For'ard, the rest of the crew were clustered around the foc'sle hatch in attitudes strained and expectant. The helmsman, when 'Bijah joined him, was sweating profusely, his teeth locked, his bare toes gripping the deck so hard that flecks of white showed through the grimy skin.

"Point her up," 'Bijah snapped. "You're spilling a knot of wind out of those sails."

The man looked at 'Bijah almost appealingly, but he strained harder against the spokes.

There wasn't a sound audible, except the humming of the wind in the rigging. Then, with an unexpectedness that was heart-shaking, a roar resounded from the cabin.

"Damn you, Geoffrey, get back to hell where you belong! It's your fault you have a broken neck. I told you to leave her alone. The wench wasn't worth it, you fool. Go back to her—she's waiting for you. No? Take that!"

A bottle crashed to splinters, and 'Bijah heard the dripping of liquid on the cabin stairs, and the chattering teeth of the man beside him—and his own voice, which he kept steady by an effort:

"Bear down on that wheel, Jack! Haven't you ever been drunk—"

Tenor laughter jeered up the hatch.

"Damn, footless ghost! Peletiah! Where are you, boy? Another bottle or I'll give you the tanning you deserve."

For'ard, Lew Taney had risen to his feet expectantly. The group of men on the foc'sle were cowering together like a pack of beaten dogs.

"Bosun," hailed 'Bijah.

Black Barnaby came aft, tugging dutifully at his forelock.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"What's gotten into you men?" 'Bijah demanded. "I want some show of discipline on deck. Send the hands off-watch below, and put the others to work." He was exasperated. "What's gotten into you?" he repeated.

"Well, sir, Mr. Mayo, 'ee never can tell wi' the cap'n this way," Black Barnaby muttered. "And 'tis awful bad luck, sir, him sayin' the things wot he do."

"Granny talk," scoffed 'Bijah. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Look sharp to it or I'll crack a few heads."

"Would 'ee jest tell 'em that, sir?"

"I wouldn't waste breath on them. Put them to work. I want everything snugged down for the night."

THE twilight deepened. 'Bijah speculated on the present activities of Mr. Wells, who'd had more than two watches off. Probably sleeping in his bunk, safely out of the fracas. Not that that annoyed 'Bijah particularly. He preferred to handle the situation alone after what Da Souza had told him.

The running lights and the binnacle-lamp were lit, and a Portygee hand named Tony came aft to relieve Jack. Tony was more jumpy than the American had been. Bijah spoke sharply to him several times before he was capable of steering a true course, but he did fairly well until Stanford opened a conversation in Portuguese with a ghost named Inez. Then his teeth commenced to rattle, and a flood of saints' names poured from his lips. The schooner broached to a moderate sea, and 'Bijah heaved up on the wheel, himself, cursing with the new-found proficiency which amazed him.

"I'll take a rope's-end to you, if you do that again," he finished.

Inez was supplanted by Bess in Stanford's rising delirium. He appeared to think well of Bess.

"—good slut you were—but your morals, my dear—not to be spoken of —can't fool Lion Stanford—morals for you—not for him—"

Another burst of laughter was eerie in the darkness, and he started a one-sided conversation with Doll.

"All pink-and-white you were, Doll—little plaster saint—innocent, eh? You irked me, girl—can't stand goodness—saying your prayers—phaugh! Well, you went overside—"

More laughter, mellow and musical. Despite himself, 'Bijah shuddered.

"—they all go overside—"

And without warning, Stanford burst into song. For a moment 'Bijah was entranced. The man had a marvelous voice, and the terse, savage melody he sang poured effortlessly up the vent of the hatchway.

> We've rum in the cabin,
> Black ivory in the hold—
> Who wouldn't drink to fortune
> And pledge the slaver bold?

"Ah, Mr. Satan! So you've come aboard! I knew that would fetch you. Your own song, isn't it? Well, it beats all the hymns the godly sing. Your health, Mr. Satan! They may say what they like about you, but you're a man after my own taste. You know what you want, and you get it. Nothing like another soul for your collection, is there? Clean or dirty! Here, have a drink. Peletiah, what's come over you? A glass for Mr. Satan. He's going to join in the chorus. Aren't you, good Mr. Satan, kind Mr. Satan!"

Again the wicked melody throbbed through the quiet night.

> So run the westing down, men,
> The dead go overside,
> And if the devil spares us
> We'll know the parsons lied.

" 'We'll know the parsons lied'," Stanford repeated. "Of course, they lied. It's their job. But you're not drinking! Are you being superior, Mr. Satan? Do you know, I believe you're only a sham. Stand aside, Peletiah. I'm going to—Oh, you would, you shabby fraud? Take that!"

Glass shattered angrily, and there was a squeak of protest from Peletiah:

"Oh, don't ye, Cap'n! Please—"

The sailor Tony emitted a howl of fear, and released the wheel before 'Bijah could stop him, vanishing into the shadows.

Instinctively, 'Bijah snatched at the whirling spokes, and caught the *Diana* in time to keep her from yawing broadside to the following wind. Masts and rigging creaked under the strain,

but she answered her helm as if gratefully, and he heard himself murmuring:

"There, old girl, take it easy! You aren't going to have your sticks wrenched out tonight. Easy—"

A figure loomed in front of him.

"Who is it?" he rasped.

"Me," responded Lew's voice. "I seed that Portygee scud for'ard, and figgered ye'd need help, 'Bije'. Hear to that!" Wood banged against wood. "They're all holin' up in the foc'sle. Leave me take the wheel. No knowin' what may happen next."

"SO much for Mr. Satan," Stanford was remarking conversationally. "He despises good rum. Whenever he tries to mock you, Peletiah, bear that in mind. . . He'd rather let his ghosts talk for him, the poor souls he bought, or Lion Stanford sold to him—Who's this? Oh, Donna Rosa! Take a seat, my dear. You look as charming as ever, for all that gash in your lovely breast. You were an innocent, too. You believed everything you were told. . . . A shame, if I must admit it. I have had my compunctions, Rosa. I shouldn't have wearied of a morsel as delectable as you. That wench Nihana wasn't worth it. . . . But you were so demanding. You wouldn't share. You didn't understand—"

He broke off, and his voice rose in another stave of the infamous song:

> There's wenches in Havana,
> There's girls in Charlestown town,
> Will help us spend our dollars,
> And all our memories drown.

"Ah, you never could stand me when I sang! A sad deficiency, my dear Rosa. But you'll join in the chorus, won't you? What? Gone like a wraith so soon!"

The chorus vibrated liltingly, derisively, but he stopped in the middle of it.

"Damme, I'm become a magician of prowess. It's Mr. Cullayne. . . . Don't serve him a glass, Peletiah. . . . No cheap Scotchman, second mate, or no, can blackmail me, Mr. Cullayne. You're an impertinent fellow. You don't even keep your fingernails clean. Take your hands off my table. . . . Take them off, I say. . . ! And don't think you'll walk out of here to wag your foul tongue—No, you asked for it. If I killed you in the flesh, I can kill you in the spirit."

There was another shattering of glass, another bleat from poor Peletiah.

"Never seed the human could drink like that," quoth the fiddler-cook. "But there's allus a limit. Fust thing ye know, he'll be down on the floor."

But he wasn't. The hours dragged by. A horned moon climbed the sky, and bathed the schooner in the cold radiance of its beams. The constellations marched and wheeled across the blue vault. The lights of other vessels twinkled and dimmed. And Captain Stanford raved on.

Midnight was long past when his tortured imagination evoked the ghost of 'Toinette. His compunctions about her were starred with bursts of unwilling admiration.

"What a tigress you were, 'Toinette! You had more inside your sleek, yellow hide than any peaches-and-cream miss. Aye, you'd use your knife for a man. . . . But you shouldn't have tried to rat, girl. And I should have shipped you back to Martinico the first time that green light flickered in your eyes. . . . But I was sorry, 'Toinette, believe me or not. You were better than drink, lass. Someday, if there is a hell, we'll meet again. I know you'd wait for me."

The burst of maniac laughter was as chill as the moonbeams limning the taut canvas towering above the slanting deck. But the hoarse notes of his tenor boomed triumphantly in the chorus of the song which seemed to fascinate him.

> So run the westing down, men,
> The dead go overside,
> And if the devil—

He broke off so abruptly that 'Bijah and Lew exchanged looks of bewilder-

ment. The silence was oppressive. Then a groan of anguish drifted up the hatch.

"Oh, God! But if there were a God such things could never be. Such men as I—"

Again he lapsed into silence. There was not a sound to contend with the contented chirping of the schooner, the wind twanging in the rigging, mumbling a bass accompaniment in the hollow of the sails.

AN hour passed during which 'Bijah and Lew scarcely moved, and the eastern sky commenced to whiten.

'Bijah signed to Lew to take the wheel.

"I'm going to kick those loafers out of the foc'sle," he whispered.

"Aye, it's over," the cook agreed, cuddling his limber fingers around the spokes. "And none overside — yet, 'Bije'."

Striding forward, 'Bijah meant to do exactly what he had threatened, but it wasn't necessary. He yanked the hatch doors apart, and the crew hustled up the ladder at his first angry bellow: "All hands on deck!" Black Barnaby led the hangdog procession, tugging at his forelock, scraping his right foot behind him.

"Aye, aye, sir! Don't be too 'ard on us, Mr. Mayo. We'm seed Cap'n Stanford thisaway afore, and it do fair fright the guts out of us."

"I'll say nothing for the moment, bosun," 'Bijah decided. "Turn them all to. Holystone decks, overhaul rigging, sheets, halyards. A man to relieve the cook at the wheel—if there's such a thing as a man in the cowardly lot of you. Sound the bilge, test all pumps and report to me."

He turned and walked aft—to be confronted by Captain Stanford, emerging from the cabin hatch. Stanford's eyes were sunk deep in their sockets. His nose jutted prominently from a ravaged face. But his dress was spick and span, and he was clean shaven.

"You have done very well, Mr. Mayo," he said, his voice courteous and under control. "I am obliged to you. If apologies were worth the breath they waste, I should offer you one." Somehow, by what must have been a supreme effort of will, his somber features lit up in one of those rare smiles which transformed his whole expression. 'Bijah forgot his indignation in sympathy for a tortured soul. Could this be the man who had raved through the night of sins almost incredible? 'Bijah rubbed a hand across his eyes, challenging his own memory. "You are tired," Stanford continued. "I'll take the schooner."

"Aye, aye, sir," 'Bijah mumbled, and started toward the hatch. At the head of the stairs he checked to allow Mr. Wells to pass, and remembered a last duty. "I couldn't have managed without the cook," he said, scowling at the mate, who looked away from him.

"I appreciate that." Stanford answered bleakly.

(To be continued)

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"It's on me, comrades!"

THE NINE OF SPADES

By PIERRE CHAINE
and
GEORGES SURDEZ

THE whole tragic business started in a most natural fashion. The last shots of the combat were receding into the gathering dusk, crackling in spurts from the south. A counter-attack launched by the French, with a battalion of the Foreign Legion as a spearhead, had ripped along the flank of the attacking Moroccans, nailed them to the spot at first, then rolled them back. The mist of early evening had turned to a drizzle.

"Sergeant Richoux!" the captain commanding the Second Company called. The noncom came forward, presented arms. An old soldier, a veteran, with a weather-beaten face, a graying mustache clipped short under a reddish nose. "You'll take your group and occupy the little blockhouse at Ain-Jellah. You were there when it was being built, you know the way: Five or six kilometers at the outside. Nothing to worry about; it's a long way back of the actual lines."

Richoux knew this only too well. It meant that in the morning the company would advance without him. He would be stuck in the rear, cooling his heels, guarding an unfinished field fortification.

"Captain—" his voice held some of his anguish— "I respectfully observe that there are only seven men in my group. Nienzak was killed this afternoon, and—"

"That's why I picked your group."

That was final. Further speech would have displeased the officer, who did not like to argue over orders. Richoux imparted the news to his men, who grumbled but started to buckle on their equipment. They filed after him, away from the front, over the paths covered by a thin layer of slippery mud, dodging into the fields at times to avoid the splashing of passing carts.

There were Keppeler, Geingrob and Barvock, who were Germans; Fonkin, a Russian; Faure, a Swiss; Jaboulet and Durieux, both recorded as Belgians and both known to be French. They were weary, sleepy, all seven of them, with the ache of a thirty mile march in their calves and thighs.

"It's a rotton shame," Jaboulet grumbled loudly. "Seven hundred and eighty-nine guys in the battalion, and they pick us for the job. And they don't even let us hang around for soup and the booze distribution they promised us!"

"Booze distribution, hell!" Keppeler shot over his shoulder. "The booze didn't even arrive. No food, no wine, no booze, nothing—it's march off and croak, you slob! That's the Legion, eh? Well, as far as I am concerned, I say the Legion be—".

The man at the end of the line laughed clearly. It was young Durieux, who was certainly not eighteen years old, who missed bodily comforts less than the more mature soldiers. Durieux, today, needed no food, no booze, no rest. He had marched to his first combat, had received the baptism of fire, had killed, with the bayonet, a man who sought to kill him. That was enough to keep him warm awhile!

"Seditious speech that was, Keppeler—fifteen days in the jug if our sergeant knows his job!" His cheerful voice rang out: "Eh, Sergeant, we got a defeatist along!"

"Shut that big mouth of yours," another man protested.

"Yes, cut it!" Richoux invited. He was more than forty, looked back over more than twenty years of army life, including the long months of the Great War. The kid was all right, had performed like an old-timer that afternoon, but he irritated his elders at times. For a long time, the little party progressed quietly, eight silhouettes in baggy khaki, shapeless from protruding equipment, bristling with the rigid lines of rifle, bayonet-scabbard and leather peak.

"I'm dying for a drink," Keppeler said.

"Suck your thumb," a friend suggested.

They entered a small village, which was occupied by a section of North African *Tirailleurs,* commanded by a very tall, very lean adjutant. Richoux naturally halted to exchange greetings, announced his destination, the blockhouse two miles up the slope. And he was about to give the order to progress, when Keppeler grasped his arm and indicated a small barrel, up-ended against the wall of a house. Richoux was interested at once.

"What have you got there, Adjutant?" he wondered hopefully.

"Brandy." The other shrugged. "A peddler's cart was overturned just outside this place this afternoon. Guess he was scared the natives would break through, because he left a lot of stuff where it fell. There were two of those barrels, but some artillerymen grabbed one before we took charge."

Richoux swayed on his aching feet.

"Didn't even tap it?" he asked, amazement in his tone. He was cold and moist, and there was marvelous warmth in that barrel, liquid sunshine.

"No." The other smiled faintly: "You see, I don't touch alcohol. Not even wine. And our chaps are Moslems, can't touch the stuff."

Richoux grounded his rifle, unhooked the tin cup at his side.

"Then give us a drink, eh? We were supposed to be issued with *gniôle* to-

night, but we were ordered out before it reached our outfit. A cup each, that's all."

"Can't do it. It isn't mine."

"It's lost, isn't it?" Richoux protested. "But all right, just fill us one bottle, one single, lousy bottle. It won't cost you a thing, you know." When the other shook his head with a broadening grin, Richoux grew dignified. "I'm detachment chief, and I'll sign you a receipt." He struggled with himself a moment. "I'll even pay you something for it!"

"Nothing doing, nothing doing!"

RICHOUX'S rugged face darkened. A glance at the men behind him showed him he had support. They needed a drink of strong stuff, they wanted it desperately. First because they needed a bracer, then because it was being denied them, denied them by a hog who did not even drink himself!

"Go on, scram!" The adjutant stood with his feet apart, his hands on his hips. He was enjoying the sight of these men, who stood before him, drooling for a drink, ready to beg. It would be an amusing story to tell his comrades of the Native Infantry: Eight Legionnaires panting before a barrel, actually offering to pay! "You Legionnaires think you rule the world!"

"Listen," Richoux sought to conceal his rising anger: "Cut out the kidding and give us a drink. The stuff is doing nobody any good, where it is. We've fought all day and—"

"You aren't the only ones who fought all day!" the lean noncom laughed bitterly: "What do you think we were doing? Holding your coats?"

"So you won't let us have a drink?"

"No. And if you say another word about it, I'll have that barrel dumped into the street. That's final." The adjutant spoke in Arabic, and two of his men, grinning widely, started toward the barrel. Richoux cleared his throat, anxious, anguished: Good brandy poured in the mud! Could he bear to see that?

But it was Keppeler who acted, unexpectedly. The muzzle of his Lebel rifle darted to a spot two inches beneath the Frenchman's chest, and when the thin fellow sought to move back, he found himself caught between Geingrob and Fonkin, who had come forward without a visible signal to shut off his retreat.

"I don't know what our sergeant's going to do," Keppeler said, excitement thickening his German accent, "but me—as soon as that liquor is spilled, I pull the trigger and put one right through your guts. Want to play?"

"I'm your superior. It's murder—"

"Call it what you like, fellow—it'll be the same to you. I was shooting all day long at guys not half so mean as you, who had nothing I wanted. I want a drink."

"Keppeler, take it easy," Richoux admonished him.

"Sergeant, if you move, I'll blow his liver out. He's had a good time kidding us. Now he doesn't like it. You! I give you five seconds to let us at that barrel. One—two—"

More than Keppeler's threat, more than the muzzle of the rifle, the expression on Richoux's face alarmed the adjutant. For Richoux had known Keppeler for several years, and felt sure that he would shoot as he promised. The French noncom surrendered.

"All right. But I'll remember your mug, Legionnaire."

Keppeler laughed.

"First-Class Legionnaire Keppeler, Stanislas, Number 14786! Not hard to find—Second Company, March Battalion of Legion. And if you want a good boot in the pants, tell this story to our captain! Come along, and tell your men to keep off."

The adjutant was white, shaken by

anger, but he had enough presence of mind not to precipitate a row between his men and the Legionnaires. The bung was knocked out expertly, and Richoux's tin cup was filled to the brim. He smiled widely after a first sip.

"Eh, we're not being cheated! Get a taste of this!"

The men filed by, drank. Durieux, who was last, coughed after the first swallow, but drained the cup at the second try, like a little man.

"It's got a kick, all right," he announced importantly. He did not touch strong drink as a rule. But he was a Legionnaire among his kind, and before spectators of another unit. "Good stuff!"

"You said it," Richoux agreed. He was feeling the warmth of the brandy in his belly. It oozed subtly into his limbs, up to his brain. Richoux loved drink and had been deprived of it for a week. Mechanically, as Durieux stepped aside, he held out his cup again, and the barrel was tilted obligingly.

"I protest—" the adjutant said feebly.

They all laughed. Keppeler and the others had their drink. Young Durieux made off with his second helping in a single gulp. His naturally rosy cheeks had turned scarlet, his eyes shone.

"We ought to take some with us," he suggested.

"Great idea!" all approved.

"Just a moment," Richoux intervened. "Can't empty the canteens of water until we find out if there's any at the dump where we're going."

"There's a well there, Sergeant," Keppeler declared.

"All right. I authorize emptying the canteens." He gave the example, drained his water into the mud, refilled his two quart container from the barrel. The brandy, dark and gleaming, gurgled into the tin. Screwing the plug back into place, Richoux beamed on the other noncom: "Hell, old chap, it's not a tragedy! Buck up!"

"It's pillage, that's what, pillage! You'll hear about it, and damned soon!"

"Sure, so what?" Richoux touched his breast: "Sergeant Richoux, Military Medal, War Crosses, nine citations, three wounds! Forty-four months of trenches, seven years in Morocco. I suppose they'll shoot me for requisitioning a couple of quarts of booze? Don't make me laugh."

"Threats against a superior—" the adjutant muttered.

"We're Legionnaires, d'you get that?"

It was Durieux, his boyish face flushed, his eyes starting from his head. He was not very tall, but his shoulders and arms were well muscled. And the right fist, clenched and held under the *Tirailleur's* nose, was impressive enough.

"Legionnaires, eh, Legionnaires!" He repeated. "Go on, make another crack and I'll mop up the gutter with you, you cretinous, ignorant, chevroned louse, you dim-witted degenerate son—"

Richoux chuckled, realizing what was happening. He grasped the young Legionnaire by the belt, hauled him away and shoved him among the others.

"Forget it. The kid isn't used to booze and is soused! Sorry. You guys keep him quiet—"

"He insulted me," the adjutant stated. "You'll testify he—"

"Forget it—" Richoux started to explain. And while he was explaining, his men were filling their canteens, the big tin cooking pots they carried, everything that would take and retain liquid. "Well, come on, boys, we've got to make Sin-Jellah before dark."

The native soldiers had picked up their rifles, understanding that something was being put over on their leader. There were thirty-five or more of them, all good fighters, brave men. They hated Legionnaires with an ancient, venerable hatred that had roots in the days when they had been on the opposite side. But the adjutant held up his hand.

"Make way for these men," he ordered. "Edriss, get to the lieutenant. You chaps

are going to be mighty sorry for this."

THE departure was quiet enough, save for Durieux, who had to be hauled away several times, as he whirled and swung punches at the bystanders. In a short time, the little party was out of the village, slipping and sliding along the muddy paths, up toward the low white walls of the abandoned blockhouse.

"Something tells me," remarked Fonkin, "that we'll pay big for these drinks!"

"Hell," Keppeler protested. "Who was hurt? And our word's as good as theirs. There was a bit of an argument, we'll admit, but nobody threatened anybody. That guy's just sore because we wouldn't pay him for stuff that never belonged to him."

"Keppeler, you're a lying swine!" the sergeant declared.

"Sure, and you'll be another when needed. Anyway, we couldn't let him get away with it. Could we?"

"No."

"I'll sock him in the nose," Durieux was mumbling thickly. "I'll sock him! Yeah, I was supposed to go to school, eh? I couldn't make my own way, eh? How do you like this, how?"

"He's soused as a Polack," Keppeler announced.

"He'll sleep it off. Steady, Durieux. Come on, lad!"

"Coming, coming." The young fellow's voice rose into a whine. "Why in hell couldn't I sock him in the nose?"

"He'd have folded you into four pieces and shoved you right in his hip pocket," Sergeant Richoux informed in a paternal tone. "Want to be careful of that skinny type when they're wiry. Well, here we are—"

The eight men were standing in the middle of the small enclosure. Two men swung the massive door closed. Then some one announced:

"The well's choked up."

"Hell, we'll clear it in the morning," Richoux said, after a startled pause. "And we've got something to drink."

They had. Counting canteens and cooking vessels, they had nearly forty quarts of fluid. Independence in an isolated post, reserve rations and close to five quarts of brandy per man—the little detachment believed it had reached Paradise.

"Fonkin, take the first turn of guard." Richoux turned to the others: "As for us, a bit of a nightcap, and a bit of a nap. Let's go, fellows!"

THE drizzle ceased, the stars came out and the magnificent night curved over the blockhouse.

The Legionnaires gathered about a small fire and started to drink their brandy. No one suggested cooking, and they ate tinned beef, sardines, cold sausage, with army biscuit. They sang, indescribably shocking marching songs alternating with sentimental, mournful German ballads and maudlin popular ditties. Before long, however, the miles they had marched, the intense excitement of the fight, the soporific effect of the alcohol, combined and asserted themselves. They fell asleep as if drugged.

But Richoux knew his men and had picked the right one for the first turn of guard duty. Fonkin did not grow drowsy when he drank. On the contrary, the stuff seemed to run through his veins like fire. Moreover, Fonkin had a hunch that all would not go well with them.

Not that he cared much nor worried unduly. He had slept in palaces, drunk champagne and smoked good cigars. He had slept in barns, drunk from gutters and picked up discarded cigarette butts. He had been born, was alive and would die. Whatever happened in between was not excessively important.

When his normal trick of two hours ended, he did not awake anyone. He was not sleepy and felt a sort of rough, casual pity for the others. Suddenly, he

discerned a light in the distance, a small, yellowish light bobbing as it grew in size.

Evidently a lantern carried by a walking man.

Before very long he heard the steady tramping of several men. He saw, dimly, several shadowy figures around the light. He snapped a cartridge into the chamber of his rifle, called out.

"Halte-là! Qui vive?"

"France! Officer of *Tirailleurs!*"

"Stop where you are!" Fonkin was puzzled. He shouted for the guard, and at last some one joined him—Keppeler, who said that Richoux had drunk so much no one could get him to budge. For a few seconds, there was an animated and confused discussion as to the best course to follow. It was out of the question to allow the officer to enter and find the sergeant dead drunk. Then Keppeler had a brilliant idea.

"Password!" he shouted, and added just loud enough for his comrades to overhear: "If he knows it, he 's smart. I don't." And when the officer replied angrily, he informed him that the Legionnaires had been instructed not to allow anyone within the blockhouse until further orders from their captain.

"You're quibbling, man!" the other called back. "Look—see these?" The lantern was raised so that its light illuminated two loops of gold around a khaki cuff. "I'm a lieutenant and I must speak to your sergeant."

"I'm in charge here."

"You're a liar! You have an accent and the sergeant spoke good French. I give you two minutes to decide; then I'm coming—"

Keppeler mumbled curses. Then he sought counsel in his canteen, deeply. Inspired, he resumed the conversation.

"Eh, you who say you're an officer! We're under orders to hold this place against anyone until relieved by our company. Get me a written order from my captain. Otherwise, nothing doing."

"I'm coming," the officer was furious. "Stop me at your own risk."

And he advanced up the slope, lantern in hand.

"Lieutenant," Keppeler resumed, "you know what orders are; you're putting us in the wrong when we're doing our job. Listen—"

The other halted, stood there as if thinking the matter over. Of course, he could not be sure just what orders had been given the Legionnaires. And, in the army, orders are not subject to ordinary common sense interpretation.

Suddenly, brutally, the detonation of a rifle cracked out. The lantern was smashed. And, naturally, that single shot aroused answering reports in the hills, along the front lines, where nervous fingers reacted before thought intervened. A prolonged, remote fusillade hammered in the night.

"Name of a dog!" Keppeler howled. "Who did that?"

"Durieux—"

"The crazy fool! Now, we're in for it!" He raised his voice: "Eh, anyone hurt?"

From the wall, the listeners could hear men stirring in the darkness, then protesting voices: "Please, *mon lieutenant*, don't go! They're all soused as hogs. They've gone nuts. They'll shoot you!" Then the officer's voice, shrill with rage: "Adiutant, release me—let go, damn you —I'll—" Then those around him must have convinced the lieutenant that it was even more stupid than dangerous to risk being shot by a pack of drunkards.

"This isn't the last of it!" he called out. "I'll have the whole gang court-martialed, as sure as my name's Lamark! I'll give you a chance to sober up, out of kindness."

"Many thanks!" Keppeler shouted.

But that was only bravado, to save his face with the infantrymen. He knew that matters had taken a most serious turn with that shot. Officers could not be fired upon with impunity. Visions of prison walls, of shackles, of endless years

'in the shade', fretted him. He sought to awake Richoux.

But the sergeant, who had drained his canteen and borrowed more from his subordinates, had passed out cold. Shaking, slaps, pleas, everything failed. When he was hoisted to his feet, he settled back like a bag of meal.

Keppeler looked about him helplessly.

"We're cooked, done for!" He spotted young Durieux! "What did you go and do that for, you mush-mugged puppy!"

"To whom are you speaking?" Durieux asked truculently.

"To you!" Keppeler relieved his irritation with a solid smack.

That was the beginning of a pretty fight. The brandy was still strong in all of them, and those able to stand waded in, taking sides. Fonkin, his legs swinging from the guard-wall, watched with cool, almost detached interest. The drunken men battered one another heartily, stumbled, fell in the mud, rose again, groping at random, in the dark. This, he mused, was much better than any lecture on temperance.

A man got sick, went aside; one by one, others followed. And a great thirst gripped them all. And they found nothing in the canteens save alcohol. Some tried to filter mud through a handkerchief, but the process was slow and yielded little.

"Water, water—"

For a long time, the courtyard was like a madhouse. Then weariness came again, and they collapsed.

DAWN broke, pale and sinister, with a sky greasy as a smear of lard. Aching in every joint, devoured by a fierce thirst, the eight Legionnaires stared at each other. Fonkin expressed the situation in a few words:

"Five to ten years in a penitentiary."

Richoux scraped his finger-nails on his unshaven cheeks, his eyes red-rimmed, blinking. Whether awake or not, he was responsible. Resistance against a superior on duty, resistance arms in hand! Attempted murder on the person of an officer!

"A rotten fix," he admitted.

For him, the drop would be deeper. For he would suffer military degradation, lose his chevrons not by a regimental decision, but in a public ceremony. The worst of it was that not one of them felt guilty of evil intent. They blamed the adjutant, who had dared them to drink. If the swine had allowed them each a small drink, peacefully, quietly, all of this would have been avoided.

"They're coming," called Jaboulet, who was on watch.

All sought loopholes. Perhaps a half company of native infantry was plodding up the trail behind a lieutenant, probably Lamark.

"It's over," Richoux grunted.

"You mean you'll give in?" Keppeler asked.

"What else can we do?"

"Listen, if we give in just now, we're in real trouble. In the company, I mean. The captain will work like the devil to get us out of this mess, if it's just a shooting thing. But if he is humiliated, if eight of his guys are led back to camp like a gang of criminals, he'll never forgive us, wash his hands. And every Legion officer will be the same. Privately, you know they'd sooner see us murderers and corpses than to have us disarmed by that outfit of *bicos*."

This was such an accurate estimate of the situation that all agreed. They would not only be punished by a court-martial, but they would lose the esteem of their comrades, from colonel down to the last new-hatched private. Eight Legionnaires surrendering their rifles and ammunition to *Tirailleurs!* The Legion much preferred the tragic to the ridiculous.

Richoux, suffering from a terrific hangover, waved his hands weakly. All the

will power seemed to have seeped out of him. Keppeler considered him a moment with pity, then nodded:

"Keep out of it. You can say you were ill. They'll go easier on me because I am a private." He climbed to the crest of the wall, hailed the oncoming men: "There's an automatic rifle trained on you. If you come nearer, we'll fire."

As a matter of cold fact, he told the truth. Faure had shoved the automatic into a loophole, and Jaboulet, his number one aid, inserted a clip. Without further conference, they all knew that they would fight and kill, accept death, rather than shame their outfit by a cowardly surrender before superior force.

The lieutenant halted his men with a gesture, came forward alone. He was handsome, young, and seemed really embarrassed by the situation.

"Look here, fellows—give in easily. You're sober now. I will try to smooth matters a bit. It was a drunken spree, that's all. We know Legionnaires. Just a bit of *cafard,* eh?"

"That's all, Lieutenant."

"Then I'm coming in—"

"No."

"You're making your case worse."

"Listen, Lieutenant, here's our proposition: You inform our battalion, and have a Legion detachment come here. You understand, we can't just surrender to—"

The officer's expression changed.

"To what? To us? You have nerve! I'm an officer in the French Army, but my authority is not recognized in your bunch? I'm supposed to put on kid gloves and send messengers around for your chiefs? Now let me tell you: We'll inform nobody, and we'll get you. If you start firing, we'll bring up mortars."

"Go ahead," Keppeler challenged.

The lieutenant beckoned to his men, who started forward.

"Faure, a warning burst over their heads," Keppeler ordered.

Legionnaire Faure pressed the trigger, and the automatic hammered five times. The effect was magical: The infantrymen scattered, very hastily, and crouched on the ground. Their officer, trembling, impotent, remained erect, shaking his fist.

"You—you maniacs!"

"The next will be aimed correctly, Lieutenant."

For a moment, it appeared as if the officer would order an attack. Then he shrugged: "I'll leave my men here on observation. I don't want useless killing. But I warn you that my superiors will not advise informing the Legion. It's a question of general discipline. We can't have this, you know."

"I get your point, Lieutenant," Keppeler said, generously. And as the officer left to get instructions, he dropped back to the yard. "Keep an eye on them. Those *bicos* are tricky devils."

"How does it look?" Richoux wondered.

"Oh, hell! We probably won't have to shoot anyone. They'll get the captain to come over, if we bluff it out long enough."

"If we kill anybody, it's curtains."

"Eh?" Keppeler laughed: "You're telling me!"

"I'm thirsty," Durieux declared.

"Suck your thumb," some one advised him callously.

They were all thirsty, and they could no longer stomach what was left them of the brandy. Most of them wished never to see the stuff again, let alone smell or drink it. Hard work brought moist sand into sight at the bottom of the well, and the men sucked wetted cloth avidly. The morning hours dragged by. There was fighting in the distance, probably the Legion units were engaged and out of reach!

This was confirmed around noon, when a large observation plane flew low over the blockhouse. At first, all feared it would drop bombs, but a weighted message thudded to the ground instead. It

was signed by a staff-officer, ordered the eight men to surrender without condition.

"More guys coming up," Jaboulet announced.

Other sections of *Tirailleurs* were moving toward the blockhouse. They spread out, circled the little fort completely. Keppeler estimated that close to three hundred men now surrounded them.

"They'll take us in fifteen minutes, if they want to," he said. Then he added grimly, "But there'll be a couple of tons of cold meat scattered about before that."

Barvock, on guard, called out, "Somebody's coming!"

IT WAS the lieutenant of *Tirailleurs* again. He came alone, very close, until he had to tilt his head to address Keppeler on the wall. He appeared genuinely sorry for them all, and they understood that, just as was the case with them, he had found himself forced into this mess by circumstances, before he was aware of its complications.

"It has been decided to await the return of one of your officers. The troops surrounding you will be withdrawn in a few minutes, leaving only a section on guard." He swallowed hard, continued: "I sympathize with your desire to yield only to your own officers' orders, men. But perhaps immediate surrender would get you life sentences instead of death."

"Thanks," Keppeler said. "We'll wait for our officer."

"Eh!" Jaboulet started, as soon as the lieutenant was out of hearing: "What was that about death sentences?"

"He's cock-eyed," Keppeler stated. "The worst this could be called, and it's bad enough, is armed rebellion, which means five to ten years' imprisonment. I'd bet on that."

Richoux, standing nearby, laughed gently.

"And you'd lose, Keppeler."

"Listen, Sergeant, I know regulations, don't I?"

"Sure, but what about the Military Penal Code? Know it?"

"Enough. Armed rebellion is supposed to be five to ten. Usually, they cut it down to two or three." Keppeler frowned: "Article Two-twenty-five."

The sergeant pulled out the worn, military booklet, which, with information concerning the owner, has a brief outline of major military punishments. He thumbed the pages, nodded.

"Just as I thought," he declared. "Now, armed rebellion by a single man may mean two or three years. But here is Article 225: *'Armed rebellion of two soldiers: Five to ten years imprisonment. Armed rebellion of eight soldiers or more: Death!'*"

"Let's see—" Keppeler read, then his eyes swept the group.

"Oh, we're eight, all right," Richoux said. "I thought of it right away, that's why the steam went right out of me."

A long silence dragged by. Then someone said:

"We're one too many. One too many."

"If we were just seven," Jaboulet breathed, "or if we gave in now, like he said, to get—"

"We don't surrender!" Keppeler cut him off savagely.

"We're Legionnaires, don't you know?" Fonkin put in lightly.

"We're corpses," Faure concluded.

Geingrob spoke again, swaying from one foot to another. "Looks to me like if we were seven, only one less, we'd have a better break. Five to ten—"

"Less, probably," Richoux admitted. "You see, when it's a death sentence, the officers of the court feel grim, get stubborn. But anything small like five to ten, they'll consent to whittle it down a bit more; then there's new trials when everything is cooled down."

"Well, then," Geingrob said, "somebody ought to go."

"Go where?"

"Sometimes, I amagined dying in a bed. . . ."

"I mean die. One from eight leaves seven."

The idea was clear enough now. The eight stared at each other.

"Sure. But who goes?" Keppeler wondered.

"We could draw lots," Geingrob added, "and the man who loses takes a bit of a walk to one side, shoots himself." He indicated a sort of lean-to at one end of the enclosure." The earth is soft there. We could dig under the wall, slip the guy in, and scatter dust on top of it, like nothing had been disturbed."

"You're not so dumb," Keppeler admitted. "Well, what about it?"

Between men leading soft civic lives, the scene would have been fantastic. But these chaps were dealers of death, had risked death a hundred times. For instance, their group had started the campaign eleven men strong, counting the sergeant.

One had been wounded, two had been killed, one as recently as the preceding day.

"All right," they agreed, one after another.

"Let's get at it," Keppeler urged. What's the best way? Shortest straw?"

"I've got a pack of cards," Fonkin announced. He brought the pasteboards out, wrapped in a bit of oilskin. "I'll shuffle them, across the yard. When I come back, somebody can name the card. Then the sergeant can deal them. That way, it would need a three-men collusion to cheat."

"Right."

And while Fonkin was shuffling the pack in one corner of the enclosure, the practical Geingrob went to the spot he had indicated, and was marking off a spot with an entrenching tool. An overwhelming constraint gripped the others. For man is constructed to hope, to hope until the end.

"All set!" Fonkin returned, the cards held out on the flat of his palm.

They grouped around him.

"Name the card, Faure," Sergeant Richoux ordered.

"Eh?" The Swiss wrinkled his forehead, wiped his dripping chin. "Should be spades, eh, the death suit? In fortune telling, I mean. Sure, the nine of spades stands for death, my mother always said."

"Nine of spades, all right," Richoux repeated.

A tent cloth was unfurled, spread on the ground like a cloth. They squatted around it, and the sergeant, with steady fingers, started to whip the cards out, shooting them face down to the receiver.

Each man lifted a corner, peered. And if anyone of them had been unconcerned, he might have studied human emotions for a few seconds. Getting one's sentence of death with a flick of the wrist holds something of a thrill. Once around, twice—

"Myself," Richoux was checking aloud for the third round: "Barvock, Jaboulet, Keppeler, Durieux, Fonkin, Gein—"

"Oh!" Durieux's sharp exclamation interrupted him. The young Legionnaire, was a last surge of pride, sought to steel himself: "It's on me, comrades!" He tossed back his third card, so that it dropped face upward on the canvas: "The nine of spades!"

THE others sought to conceal their expressions of relief, of joy. And, as if fascinated, they watched the lad's face, which seemed to turn gaunt and yellow in a few seconds. He stood very stiffly. Then, slowly, without stirring his shoulders, his neck twisted, as his eyes sought the grave's emplacement. That was where he would end, there in that moist, reddish muck. Forever and ever—

Suddenly a sort of spasm shook him; he gulped back a sob.

"My real name is—" he started, then gulped: "I mean, a letter should be written to the following address—no, what's the use—all right, all right, I'm it." He picked up his rifle, opened the breech. He considered the cartridge with attention. Then, slowly, he clicked the metal back into place. "All right."

He fumbled with the rifle, started to walk aside.

"Just a minute," Richoux protested. He grasped the young man by an elbow. "Come back here! Listen, men, we're all grown. Barvock, next youngest, is twenty-five, am I right? Is it just to let him take the rap? He's only a kid. He doesn't even like to drink, and it's booze that got us here."

"You'll make him feel sorry for himself, that's all," Keppeler reproved. "Cards are cards—"

"At least, let's try again—" Richoux begged.

But six set faces greeted the proposition. They had gambled once, loyally. It was unfair to gamble again. And suppose Durieux 'won' again, what then? A third round, until he was safe? This was comical.

"Oh, cut it, Sergeant," Durieux spoke in a hoarse whisper. "I can take it."

Keppeler gave Durieux a shove.

"Go on, kid. Get it done."

"All right. So long."

Durieux peered around blindly, seeking a corner where he could get it done. Then his jaw clenched and he deliberately walked toward the grave emplacement. He would at least save them the trouble of carrying him very far.

Then old Richoux shouted after him.

"Come back here, kid. Don't blubber, it's all right. I'm old enough to make a swell corpse!" He turned to the others. "I'm the oldest; I wear the chevrons; I got you into this. It's up to me."

Durieux sank down, hunched, weeping openly.

Keppeler consulted the others with a glance, yielded to his impulse of sublime generosity. Heroism, like panic, is highly contagious.

"We'll have a round and leave the kid out. All right?"

"The hell with that," Richoux announced.

A strange peace had come to his face; he was almost handsome. He stripped himself of equipment, sat down on his pack. From a corner of his right cartridge pouch, he took out a small tin box.

"Know what these are?" He shook out two pills, which he rolled on his palm. "Poison. I got them some time back, in case I was ever taken alive by the natives. Sometimes you don't get a chance to shoot yourself, you know. The guy who gave them to me said they worked fine. Maybe you kick around a bit, but you don't suffer. And it's less messy than spreading your brains all over the lot, isn't it?"

They nodded dumbly.

"I suppose I better take them in something—"

Jaboulet came forward, with a tin cup in his hand. It was water, precious water, almost half a cup of water, squeezed from wet rags soaked at the bottom of the well. Richoux shook his head.

"Thanks just the same. But is there any of the stuff left?"

Someone filled a cup from one of the cooking pots. Richoux looked a second at the dark yellow fluid, then dropped the pills into it.

"Funny, eh?" he remarked. "Like everybody else, I've pictured my death. Sometimes it would be in a fight, from a bullet clean through the nob. Sometimes, it would be from wounds, thirsty and suffering. Sometimes, I imagined dying in a bed. When the pharmacist in Taza gave me those, a couple of years back, I figured maybe I'd use them. But in a hurry, before anyone could get to me." He laughed contentedly. "But I never thought I'd be seated with my pals, quietly, and go out after a swig of swell brandy. Gabbing away, friendly like, and bidding them good luck—here's to you!"

He drained the cup, shifted his position to rest on the spread canvas on which he had dealt the cards. His smile distorted into a grimace, his knees hunched. . . .

THERE was a sharp order, the accused men rose.

The court-martial had gathered in the reception room of the administration building in Dar-Salah. Behind the long table covered with a green cloth, sat the judges, presided by a colonel. They were all seasoned soldiers.

Seven accused men were before them —seven Legionnaires, in very clean khaki, buttons polished, shoes like mirrors. Six of them were grown men, hardened by fighting, men who had suffered fever, thirst, wounds, fatigue, men who loved coarse pleasures and alcohol, six mature warriors. The seventh, whose face was very pale, whose lips were set to avoid quivering, appeared like a schoolboy: Durieux.

"Barvock, Durieux, Faure, Fonkin, Geingrob, Jaboulet, Keppeler: You are accused of armed mutiny and consequently liable to the punishment provided by Article 225 of the Military Penal Code—"

The charges were itemized, read off in a loud voice.

". . . greeting Lieutenant Lamark, sent to talk things over, with rifle shots . . ."

Here, Keppeler, who wore the chevron of first-class private, interrupted loudly: "Colonel, we never meant to hit him. We shot to scare him off."

"Be quiet," the presiding judge admonished. "Only answer when questioned." Then, after a glance at the others, he resumed: "Legionnaire Keppeler, you told your story to the investigators, that you acted under the influence of drink and discouragement. In a fit of *cafard*. Can't you evoke better motives?"

"No, Colonel, for that's the truth. We drank a lot, and got pretty fed up, sort of lost our heads."

"That's the only reason why you wished to keep the officer out?"

"Yes, Colonel."

"Didn't your desire to keep investigators away have something to do with the disappearance of your chief, Sergeant Richoux? What happened to him? This court is much concerned with that question, you understand."

"No. Sergeant Richoux deserted that night, after we got the booze, but before we fired on the officer. We were hoping he would come back—" Keppeler launched boldly into fiction— "and that was one of the reasons we were holding out. To give him a chance to return."

"Keppeler, you are lying!" The officer handling the prosecution was out of his seat, like a charging tiger: "We know what happened: Sergeant Richoux was fine noncom, who did not hesitate to do his duty, as soon as you had lowered your rifle. He undoubtedly wished to do the right thing, surrender to an officer, report the small matter of stealing the brandy. One of you men killed him, and we'll discover which one!"

Keppeler shrugged carelessly. "Richoux was my pal. I would have risked my life for his. Matter of fact, I had saved his life, and he had saved mine, a few times."

"Can you give me the exact time when your chief left? Think it over carefully. The prosecutor cast an eye on the judges for approval of his generosity: "Search in your memory, consult your comrades, before making a definite reply."

"The sergeant suddenly left us, soon after we had the brandy, before the shots were fired. All my comrades will back me up, eh?"

One by one, the others nodded confirmation.

"You are positive that he did not get into the blockhouse at all?"

"We are positive."

The officer smiled coldly.

"That's too bad. Here is a document I held in reserve for this occasion, and which will prove that you lied. It is a photograph, taken on the morning of the tenth, by the plane which flew over your post to drop a weighted message asking you to yield. The plane was flying very low, and it is easy to distinguish eight men inside the blockhouse on this enlargement, even without the use of a magnifying glass. With a glass, one can spot the chevrons clearly! So that in the morning, Sergeant Richoux, doubtless your prisoner, as he took no part in the talk with the officer, was with you. Are you claiming that this photo is a forged document, a mistake?"

"What have you to say now?" the presiding colonel asked.

"I'd like to see that photograph."

Keppeler received the document, scanned it a long time. Yes, one by one, he could identify himself, his friends, Richoux. He glanced at his comrades and shrugged helplessly.

"Nothing to say, Colonel."

"You admit that you disposed of your chief?"

"I have nothing to say, Colonel."

Then it was that Fonkin stepped forward, asked for permission to speak.

"You have a confession to make, Legionnaire?"

"No, Colonel." Fonkin, shaved, slender and self-assured in his khaki *capote*, smiled faintly. "May I speak? Thank you. At one time, I had the right to sit in judgment of soldiers, as an officer. I doubtless made many mistakes then, because I did not know, could not know. Soldiers lock so many things within themselves. There are things that they feel those above them could not understand. We shall see whether they are right or wrong—"

"Proceed, Legionnaire."

"Please believe that I am not concerned for myself. I have been sentenced to death three times before, in Russia, and I am alive. Sooner or later, I shall not avoid it."

"This court is not interested in your

past exploits and adventures, Legionnaires, nor in your philosophy of—"

"In all justice, Colonel, it should be." Fonkin smiled again, almost with insolence: "For a man is the sum of his past. Nevertheles, here is what happened—"

"Don't," Keppeler shouted. "Don't—he wouldn't have wanted it!"

"Be quiet, Keppeler. Go on, Legionnaire."

Fonkin obeyed. In brief sentences, he told their adventure, the incidents within the blockhouse. When he described the dealing of the cards, Durieux, unable to stand longer, sank back on the bench and hid his face in his hands.

"He died in less than a minute, Colonel. We hoped he could not feel anything, as he had claimed. The pharmacist who gave him the pills in Taza can no doubt be found. His body is under the wall and can be discovered easily, autopsied. You will grant that no matter our military crimes, we do not seem like men who would force a man to absorb poison, when a bullet would do."

The judges looked into space. The silence was complete, the room so still that the beating of hearts could be *felt*, hearts pressed by emotion and pity. Everyone thought of the death of the chief who had atoned a moment's fault by such a sacrifice, who had died to save his men, who had saved one of them, the sobbing Durieux, twice!

The colonel coughed, spoke hoarsely.

"We are to understand that you were one man too many, and that he elected to go—and out of turn?"

"Yes. That's all I have to say." Fonkin stiffened. "Except that it's a fact that Sergeant Richoux was a guy with plenty of guts!"

The prosecutor fulfilled his duty, but he lacked enthusiasm. Discipline clashed with humanity. From then on, Sergeant Richoux, a dead man, dominated and conducted the trial. For those were soldiers also, behind the table, soldiers who had lived and suffered, sinned and atoned. They paid homage to a soldier, and closed their eyes to obvious evidence.

After a brief conference, the charges were changed, the lightest possible accusations being kept. Armed rebellion became indiscipline, the fact that the performance had taken place before the enemy dropped, forgotten.

The final verdict was for six months in prison for the older soldiers, extenuating circumstances and a suspended sentence for Legionnaire Durieux.

Because the best man of them all, old Sergeant Richoux, no longer could be counted a man. One from eight left seven. As the colonel said, it was excellent mathematics and absolute justice.

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ADVENTURER *and* AVENGER

A FACT STORY

By ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN

WHAT and who is the typical adventurer? During my seventeen years on Adventure I naturally met thousands of these restless footed ones of the world, for the office was unofficial headquarters for them almost from the first. Tall and short, fat and thin, white, brown, red and black, from all quarters of the globe they came.

Some were impressive to the eye,

splendid of physique, striking of face; some had the dignified poise and stillness of a lion; some looked as if a sweep of the arm would send them flying like human tumble-weed; and others looked as if adventure of any kind were the last thing in the world that could ever have entered their lives or thoughts.

Yes, I've met them by the thousand, knowing some of them slightly, some of them very well, but I can not answer that question—I do not know what the typical adventurer is.

Nor can I even construct in my mind the ideal adventurer and name some particular man who comes closest to that ideal.

Years ago Camp-Fire went into a friendly war over the question "What is the spirit of adventure?" The campaign wound up in what was pretty much a drawn battle, and it wasn't a war between two factions but among dozens of factions.

But if I were cornered and compelled to name, from those I have personally known, one man as at least approximating the typical adventurer and, in many ways, the ideal adventurer, I think I should pick out Fritz Duquesne.

I admit that my choice is influenced to some degree by the fact that his deeds are spectacular and, some of them, intimately connected with world events of magnitude.

And without a pause I can name a list of other eligibles who have met equally well the main test of an adventurer or of any man—the actual performance in whatever circumstances happened to engulf him.

In the matter of personal appearance there is less competition, for Fritz Duquesne qualifies by picture book standards as well as by the real ones. I admit, too, that, for all his wanderings, he does not typify the care-free looseness of foot and readiness to try anything any time anywhere that characterize for most of us the adventurer par excellence, for almost from boyhood his life was dedicated to a grim purpose. But that just happened to be the case; he was a rover and a danger-seeker by nature.

In short, I'm not by any means seeking an argument on these points and am entirely ready to recognize other candidates and other answers than my own; but, whether typical and ideal or not, Duquesne is worth talking about. Some of you old-timers knew him personally, and probably all who gathered at our Camp-Fire during its first years knew him through his talks as a comrade around that friendly blaze and through his articles in our magazine. But few indeed of you knew all that was going on behind the scenes, and the story as a whole is, to put it mildly, surprising. Those of you who did not know him and perhaps never even heard of him will, I think, not find that story dull.

A MAN'S man if ever there was one, yet the ladies liked him. Whenever he came to the office there was a flurry from women editors to clerks on the four magazines published along with ours. Dark, with flashing eyes and splendid physique, charming in manner, with an unusual blending of easy informality and an almost old-fashioned courtliness, the suggestion of fierceness along with gentleness. Most of all, vitality and intensity so strong that they were like an aureole about him.

He was always pleasant to them, as if they commanded from him an unfailing respect, a tolerance for whatever they might be or do. But that was all. His inner attention seemed fixed on something else.

He smiled a great deal, far oftener than he laughed. But, however real the spread of the broad mouth and the merry twinkling of his eyes, one had the feeling that there was a part of him that never smiled.

Like a majority of the Boers, Captain

Fritz L'Huguenot Joubert Duquesne was—I hope is—half French and half Dutch. All the Duquesnes have served in army or navy, all the way down from Admiral Abraham Duquesne, one of France's great sea fighters, and most of them have been killed in action. General Piet Joubert, an outstanding figure of the Boer War, was an uncle of the captain's.

Many things have happened since I last saw Fritz Duquesne. It's eighteen years, I think. I always liked Fritz. Even if all the deaths laid to his door were wrought by him, I shall go on liking him. I do not know whether he is dead or alive, but I think he lives somewhere under another name. A few years ago the papers told of a man who was being held in New York, suspected of being Fritz. I wanted to go to see him, or at least to write him, but after some careful thinking, decided to do neither. Either it was someone in whom I had no interest, or it was Fritz and by some ill chance I might become involved in identifying him. Once, years before, the law compelled me to show some of his handwriting—the only time in the nearly quarter century I've known adventurers that, either willingly or by force, my fingers ever helped in drawing a net about any one of them.

My last word from him came on a newspaper addressed to me from Holland, a year or two after the War, printing the story of his life. On one corner was penciled, without signature, "My dead mother approves, and she was God to me."

That, I think, tells the story of Fritz Duquesne.

There were those who said that he was not a Boer at all, even that he had never seen Africa, but was born in New York City, of South Europe parents who kept a bookshop there. I have sat for hours while men who knew Africa drew him out, watching to catch him in some mistake. They didn't.

He talked in print to all the adventurers who met at Camp-Fire and he wrote articles for the magazine, yet no one ever caught him in a slip. That may mean nothing to others; to me, who knew how difficult it was to fool that audience, it meant a great deal. I know how hard it is to fake knowledge of a place or of events if someone who knows them intimately is present to check up.

Anyhow, I'd rather be proved a fool and a dupe than to doubt him in these things. Maybe he embroidered now and then. Many do. But I do not know that he did and in essentials I believe him.

One thing is sure. There is no doubt about the ferocity of his implacable hate for the English.

Adventurers may hate a people, but it is seldom a ruling passion. It is natural for those of a conquered nation to hate the conquerors, but that hate is not likely to burn steadily through the years unless there has been some particular and terrible cause.

There are atrocities on both sides in all wars, war being itself an atrocity, unleashing the beast in man. Always certain ones are responsible for a war; among those chiefly responsible for the Boer War Duquesne included Lord Kitchener. Perhaps he would have done better to fix on some of the makers of munitions, but the world had not then begun to realize that the "economic determinism" of wars is merely the greed of a few Antichrists, wars being no more necessary than that you and your neighbor should settle a difference over a boundary line by killing each other.

His hate was by no means limited to Kitchener. It was racial. But I think that in some strange way it excepted women—not only, perhaps, because at certain crises in his life British women were his saviors, but because of that feeling of his for all women. The atrocity that cankered him—he spoke of it to me only once—was the rape of both his mother and his sister by British soldiers

and the killing of his sister in her attempt to escape further rapings.

IT WAS during a fight for life that he was born of that mother, and he grew up in a day when Boer children had to fight alongside their frontier elders if all were not to be swept away by the black tide. Except for the years of studying war as an art and business, there have been few quiet periods in his life. Back in 1913, on the eve of departure for somewhere or other, he gave me the following rough notes by way of his formal introduction to Camp-Fire, expecting me to "whip them into shape." They seemed much better as they were, as did all other data from adventurers, and were printed as they stood.

A *laager,* be it said for those who do not chance to know, is a defensive ring of ox-wagons drawn close together, with baggage piled beneath—exactly the same device used by our own Western pioneers. A *sjambok* is a heavy whip of hide. Oom Paul, "Uncle Paul" Krüger, if you do not happen to remember, was President of the Transvaal Republic during the Boer War.

"I was born in Pondoland, South Africa, during a fight with the Kaffirs, who had driven us into *laager.* A number of my relatives were killed protecting my young life and her who bore me.

"My education commenced, so far as I remember, when I was taught to measure powder to load the numerous muzzle-loading rifles that we used to keep off the lions, leopards and hostile Kaffirs.

"I was taught my A-B-C by my mother, and then my education was carried on by a tutor who was a fugitive from justice—I believe an absconding bank cashier. The said education was interrupted by my being called on command three times to fight the Kaffirs before I was seventeen years old, once at eight years, once at ten. At thirteen I went hunting big game of the Zambesi for six months. Left there and crossed the Kalahari desert to Walfish Bay. Had a four days' running fight on the desert with the Herreos. Fifty of the Boer men killed by poisoned arrows from natives who dug holes in the ground and let us tread on them before they fired. After the tutor, an ordinary school and a touch of the South Africa College.

"Took up the study of explosives, blew up everybody's stray dog, was prosecuted for fishing with dynamite, showed such knowledge of explosives in cross-examination that Paul Krüger sent me to learn military engineering.

"On the ship I met the tutor who was responsible for my English and he persuaded me to take the money a kind and loving parent had given me for my needs and take a trip around the world. I did, and I paid the tutor's way. He got boozed on my money at any port where the "stagga juice" was available. Six sad months passed before dad found me at Singapore. He had a heavy *sjambok* and both I and the English tutor got it where it hurt most. Eight months later I arrived at the French military school, where I studied the art of destroying my fellow human beings by the aid of mines, pits, dynamite, nitroglycerin, electricity and big guns. In the meantime I watched every maneuver I could get to, in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and Austria.

"When the British started after our country I went home as scout, engineer and "intelligence officer", or spy, with a vast knowledge of the destructiveness of high explosives and a longing to try my theories on some real Englishmen; and I did. I blew them up at Colenso. Destroyed armored trains in Natal. Destroyed British retreats. I had a squad of dare-devil boys who used to ride around with from twenty to fifty pounds of dynamite caps and fuse in their saddlebags.

"At Dundee I fought a duel with an English Zulu while I was carrying des-

patches from Buffalo River to Eland's Laagte. He shot my horse under me. I killed him. A shell hit my second horse at Eland's Laagte and it rolled over me, breaking my arm. Afterward, when the British lancers charged on surrendered and wounded men, I got a thrust through the foot, the only part of me showing from under the horse. When night fell I was dragged from under my horse by some English girls who were doing the nurse business and before morning I managed, with a broken arm, a numbed body, and a split foot, to reach the Boer commander.

"Took part in the siege of Ladysmith off and on when I was not too weak, and being unable to get about on my bad foot, I was given mounted duty, scouting.

"Had my arm broken a second time in a hand-to-hand fight at O'Neal's farm. I fought the other fellow, a Natal carbineer, with my teeth. He is dead. I developed, while my arm was getting better—for I convalesced on horseback and my arm did not interfere with my riding—into a good scout and, gathering a number of kindred spirits, we scouted and sniped the Britishers. I had charge of an expedition against Stenacker's Horse in Lebombo. I kept them awake for three weeks, killing a few when the windage and light were good.

"The British now started to take notice of me and I was sentenced to be shot on sight. A few weeks later in an English paper I read the notice of my death; I found out later that they had shot a German professor who had curly hair like mine.

"Later I was caught by some of Lord Dundonald's cavalry and put in the jail at Barberton. I was examined (not tried) and sentenced to be shot at eight o'clock the next morning. The jailer came in the cell and handed me a towel with one end wet to wipe my face. When he turned his back to go out I threw the towel over his head, pulled him back on the floor, stunning him, and then tied the towel around his neck so that it would choke him. I took his helmet and outfit and a Webley revolver, put them on, walked out of the one-cell jail, snapped the door behind me and found myself among thousands of British troops. I worked my way to the edge of the British camp, got a horse and, amid a hail of bullets, escaped to the Portuguese frontier. Later, carrying despatches to Europe, I was captured in Lorenzo Marques, Delagoa Bay, and I put in seventeen days in the fort jail.

"When I was in the jail I worked out a scheme to take the jail and the fort, or caserne, as it is called, with the help of some other Boer prisoners. When the Portuguese heard of this they put me on a troop-ship and sent me to Portugal with sick troops, one hundred forty of whom died on the voyage. I was so sick with fever that they gave me up as a hopeless case to the medical authorities at Naples. I was expected to die by the good nuns of Santa Maria. But I escaped death, and the hospital a few nights later, and, with the help of the Belgian consul, got to our legation in Brussels. I told them great news and I was made chief of the Intelligence Department.

"My next trouble was the Cape Town plot. I put up a scheme to Oom Paul to destroy Cape Town by dynamite and fire. It looked good to him, so I went to the Cape with my plans. I kept our commander supplied with intelligence from the British lines. I was about to make the old town a mass of ruins when, three days before the final deed, I was captured by the British while I slept in Somerset House. Someone had been a traitor.

"I, with others, was tried and sentenced to death. The whole country was then put under martial law. We were to be shot in batches and I heard the others pass my cell to take the train to the interior of the colony, where they were to be shot. I was with the last batch.

Knowing that I possessed some valuable secrets, the British tried to get them from me by bribes, threats and torture. My hands were ironed behind me and I was made to sleep on my belly on that account. They also put my legs in figure-eight irons. I was in an ammunition pit in the Cape Castle in complete darkness for a month, sometimes without water for days. The press of the world made such a fuss over the shooting of the Boer prisoners that my sentence and the sentence of General Kritzinger were commuted to life imprisonment in irons. I was sent in solitary confinement in irons to Bermuda in the *S. S. Harlech Castle*. On the ship I was chained to the wall in the hold in darkness for forty-seven days—but I am not sure of the time; I might be a few days out. I was nearly mad.

"In Bermuda I was put in what was called the 'cage', especially constructed for convicts. After being there for seven months I, with Fritz Bosch and Willie Dutoit, broke from the jail and our irons after three months' work and Morse alphabet signaling on the walls. Bosch was shot and later died; Dutoit, after swimming from the prison island to the mainland, sank from loss of blood and exhaustion on the beach, for we swam for two hours and a half. He was surrendered to the British by a lady whom he had asked for help. I finally escaped to America on the yacht of —— ——, of the New York Yacht Club.

"Went to Congo into cannibal country; served there as an officer. Stayed there till Russo-Japanese war broke out. Went to Manchuria with Russians as correspondent for the *Petit Bleu* and allied papers for nine months. Served on some papers in Morocco for six weeks.

"Came to United States. Employed as newspaper man. Free-lanced in Madero revolution. Hunted in South America. Bill before Congress for introduction of foreign animals. . . .

"Have hunted all over the world—Africa, India, Australia. Have explored in the Lado, in South America, and am on my way to explore Matto Gross, the unknown central South America."

HE TOLD me that once, while a spy in Cape Town, he was walking along a lonely beach with a British non-com, alert for any useful information that might be picked up. The soldier, doing most of the talking, presently fell into telling the proud story of his own participation in an atrocity upon Boer women, including a live baby thrown down a well. Duquesne, walking step by step with him, made the proper responses to keep the tale moving, his lips applauding, each hideous detail burning itself in. When it had all been told, the Boer captain "noticed" that the bayonet swinging at the other's belt did not seem to be of regulation make, asked to examine it and, as soon as it was in his hands, plunged it into the man's entrails. While he watched him die, he said the things that had been boiling in his heart. Then he buried the body deep in the sand, where the incoming tide would leave no trace.

Murder? Ah, yes. Or fair trial, self-conviction, sentence and execution. There were no legal technicalities involved. Merely some raped women and a murdered baby.

In 1912 and 1913, being as vital mentally as physically, he had a bill before Congress for the introduction into this country of the llama, hippopotamus, bustard, giraffe, and many species of antelope, like the dikdik and koodoo of Rooseveltian fame. Silly, isn't it? Or is it? The Department of Agriculture was interested and the bill got some real consideration from Congress. If we were as intelligent in adoptions as the Japanese, it might have got more. Or if the Bureau of Animal Industry would and could be as practical as the Bureau of Plant Industry, which has for years made it its

business to introduce grains, fruits, trees, and plants from all over the world, much to our practical gain.

But no, such a proposal would be chiefly food for the wits and sophisticates, who would never think of the simple fact that horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens—all our domestic animals, I think, except turkeys and pigeons—with their incalculable economic value, were all equally foreign and ridiculous for this country until deliberately introduced. All the amusing animals named are great economic assets in their own lands and for every one of them some part of the United States provides practically the same physical conditions.

The llama is the burro of South America, but with valuable hair and hide. Our government once did introduce the camel into the Southwest. The camel did well in his new environment; that was the trouble, as is set forth in another place. A reindeer introduction into Alaska has, I believe, been more successful. The bustard is similar to our turkey. Wooded or partially wooded land unfit for cattle is good grazing for giraffes, and their flesh is a delicacy. Under our changed conditions, farmers now seldom slaughter their own beef but still often find profit in hanging up their own sheep and hogs. The easily domesticated smaller antelopes would add another resource here, as well as for the general market. Also, urged Duquesne, they make such nice pets!

But the hippopotamus? In 1904, I'm told, some bright lad took home from the St. Louis Exposition a few plants of water hyacinth, African variety, to beautify one of the Arkansas rivers. It took hold so prettily that it soon became a serious obstruction to navigation. For all I know, some chemical has long since been found to eradicate it without killing fish and poisoning stocks, but that kind of eradication costs money and certainly adds no assets.

The hippopotamus can thrive in climatic conditions like those of Arkansas, and he lives largely on water hyacinths. His hide is, or was, in high demand for automobile tops de luxe and other purposes; his teeth are commercial ivory; some of his flesh is good food, and he is harmless.

It must be admitted, however, that he has an unfortunate habit of wandering into cultivated fields, where he would seem to be inappropriate, and a hippopotamus-tight fence would be some undertaking.

IN 1911 some of the big landholders in Brazil or the Argentine wanted their government to investigate the importation of elephants from Asia or Africa to use in lumber camps and elsewhere, just as they have been profitably used in India for centuries. Whether Duquesne created their interest I do not remember, but one day in 1912 he burst into the office with a veritable sheaf of steamship tickets in his hand.

"Come on! My brother in law's in the hospital and can't go. Here are his tickets —all down the coast to Buenos Aires. It won't cost you a cent except for smokes."

The boat was to sail, if I remember, within twenty-four hours; also I had a family and a job. But it was sad to have to say no to a trip selling elephants to the West Indies, Central America, and all the way down South America to the Argentine. There's nothing I'd rather sell than elephants. Years later I covered much the same route and I missed the elephants acutely.

He wrote me on his trip, but the *Prinz Joachim,* carrying the letter, was wrecked. My first news of him, months after his departure, was the newspaper account of an attack on him and some of his family, who seem to have joined him on the return trip, during the Kingston, Jamaica, riot. One morning he called me on the phone and said he

would be in to see me that afternoon. He wasn't, nor was there any word from him until a week later, a note from a private hospital:

> I did not know I was badly hurt in Kingston. I caved in the day I called you up. A rib was planted edgewise in my lung. My jaw was splintered so badly that my face had to be opened to put it together. While they were at it, I got them to cut a Boer War bullet out of my abdomen. All O.K., I think—nothing to do till tomorrow. Will be in to see you this week. Best wishes.—*F. Duquesne*

In a remarkably few days he did appear—partially, his head being pretty well covered with bandages. The Kingston affair had been serious enough. He, Mrs. Duquesne, her brother and wife and a friend had been attacked in their car en route to dinner on an American warship by some five hundred lawless Jamaican blacks who were using a tramway strike as an opportunity for loot and violence. The gas tank was opened and the car set on fire while Mrs. Duquesne lay on its floor, crippled by a cobblestone.

Volley firing by native troops was about as dangerous to them as to the rioters. The men of the party did what they could with hammers from the toolbox against bricks and stones and razors lashed to long bamboo poles, but Duquesne, his body one big bruise, felt at the time least damaged of them all, and Mrs. Duquesne was taken to the hospital in serious condition.

Our visit was a hurried one, for he was about to return to Kingston, where Mrs. Duquesne was still in hospital, and I was leaving the next day for Costa Rica. He had married Mrs. Duquesne because of a tennis ball. With a gang of other prisoners in Bermuda he was being marched past some tennis courts where English officers and their ladies were playing, when a ball that had escaped one girl came directly to him and Captain and Mrs. Duquesne met briefly for the first time when he restored it to her. She was, I believe, the daughter of the officer or official in command of the prison on Boaz Island and thereafter managed to make his incarceration more bearable. He told me that she did more.

Fritz Duquesne

As communication of sorts was established between them and the slow weeks dragged by, the plan and means of escape were worked out between them. When he reached this country she joined him here.

Returning from his second trip to Kingston, he sailed from the Isthmus of Panama, with I do not know what Latin-American countries in between. Thereafter I saw him at intervals, sometimes frequently. Through his knowledge of big game he became acquainted with Theodore Roosevelt and even took part in the Bull Moose campaign.

Once, at a meeting of the Adventurers' Club, feeling he had been insulted, he threw a glass of wine in a man's face, seeking, not a fight, but a duel. As one of the board of governors, I joined in the vote to expel him and, I think, the other man: the club's rules were strict against any disorder at a meeting. Then I went to him and told him: "Fritz, I've voted to expel you. I'm sorry, but there were no two ways to it." Instantly his white teeth flashed in a smile and he held out his hand in unquestioning understanding. Which is one of the reasons I like Fritz Duquesne.

It is to be noted that during this period his interests were Latin-American. Sometimes there would appear with him in New York from one or another of the countries south of us men said to be powers in the politics of their native lands, potential Warwicks. There was always some vagueness about his trips; certainly no mention of German or Austrian connections that undoubtedly existed. His hatred for England made him a natural cog in the German machine; to him they were foes of his foe.

Early in 1914 he, Mrs. Duquesne and his cousin, the Vicomte de Rancougne, sailed for an expedition up the Amazon to Iquitos and thence into the Matto Grosso for scientific data and motion pictures of native life and hunting. To the rather small Vicomte might be applied the adjective "pretty" if you were careful to rob it of any least taint of effeminacy; he was noted abroad for his skill with the foils, was a member of the Adventurers' Club, liked and respected by all, and devoted to Fritz. In the shadow of the impending war, picture the three of them: Duquesne, dedicated to vengeance against England; his wife, an Englishwoman; Rancougne, a Frenchman—my last word from him he wrote as a prisoner of war at Darmstadt, Germany.

This expedition had some publicity, perhaps for camouflage purposes, because in one respect it imitated the old Spanish conquistadores. The three were to wear specially prepared partial armor of leather, through that steam of heat, for protection against the insects, poisoned arrows and blow-gun darts that are to be expected. Eight Negro machete men were to be picked up at Kingston; there were to be eighteen half-breeds, some of whom had been with Duquesne in expeditions into Colombia, Brazil and Central America; also a Great Dane, trained in the Putumayo rubber country to give warning of the nearness of poisoned arrows and pits. I do not know what became of this expedition; war had not been declared when the trip was announced, but England doubtless had been keeping more or less of an eye on Duquesne.

AFTER about two years others and myself had brief word from him that, after a bad time with fever, he was sailing for this country. Then the papers carried a cable from Buenos Aires that he had been killed by Indians near the Bolivian border. A later cable, from Montevideo, Uruguay, stated that he had been only severely wounded and found by troops near the Pilcomayo River between Paraguay and the Agentine. This must have been about May, 1916. And meantime Duquesne, it seems,

entirely unwounded, was on his way to Europe, the cables being only details in a German undertaking of much importance. He went to Breda, Holland, where the Boer Revolutionary Committee was working with the Germans.

Of what follows I know nothing. Clement Wood, in Martinique, 1931, met a Major Reginald Anson, who stated that he was Duquesne and gave Mr. Wood the material for his book, "The Man Who Killed Kitchener." I have not read this book, but an article by William C. Richards in the *Detroit Free Press* of April 17, 1932, summarizes it to this general effect:

The world knows only that in June, 1916, Lord Kitchener and his staff sailed in supposed secrecy on *H. M. S. Hampshire* on a most important and secret mission to Russia, and that he and the ship disappeared forever.

The English-Russian secret plan was to have Count Boris Zakrevski go to England and accompany Kitchener. The Germans knew this; their own secret plan was to intercept Zakrevski and put Duquesne in his place. It was done. June 5th the *Hampshire* put to sea; a storm drove back its accompanying destroyers. Thirteen German submarines lay in wait. If the final signal of a white cloth hung from a porthole did not prove sufficient, Duquesne had a special water torch and a book of message sheets, the top half of each sheet luminous, the lower half weighted, on which he was to write the route and destination and the name of the ship finally chosen. These last were not needed.

Under the shock of the torpedo the ship shuddered, half righted, began to list forward and to port. With a life preserver under his overcoat, Duquesne stepped from his cabin into the passageway, collided with a man, tramped him down. On deck confusion. A door opened and Lord Kitchener and other officers started toward the quarterdeck. A wave washed them back.

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN

Boats were launched and smashed; life-rafts next; clinging to the top of a ladder ten feet from Kitchener, Duquesne stood with hand on revolver under his coat, so that there might be no chance, content to die himself if he must. Three rafts got off—and sank. Suddenly the conning-tower of a U-boat appeared. That slim chance would do as well; Duquesne threw a life-belt toward the general. But the next wave swept General Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, down the sloping deck and over the side.

Of his staff and the crew of six hundred fifty, less than a dozen survived. Duquesne, bruised, one rib broken, was pulled aboard a submarine. He received the Iron Cross with gold leaves, worn by no other except the Kaiser himself.

RETURNING to matters of record in the public print, the British Government held him responsible for an explosion killing three men on the *Tennyson*, Bahia to New York, in 1916. (The article summarized above states that a doddering old scientist would appear in one South American port and then another, persuading ship captains to transport some small boxes of orchid with special directions for their care. Finally it was noticed that the boats carrying these apparently innocent boxes failed to reach port. The old scientist, of course, being Duquesne.)

In 1918 he was arrested by the New York police when trying to collect insurance on boxes he said had contained specimens and films, boxes which had been destroyed in a Brooklyn warehouse fire. Papers were taken out for his extradition to England. He was committed to the prison ward at Bellevue for observation as to his sanity, feigned paralysis and for three months was treated by physicians as a hopeless paralytic.

One day a voice I thought I recognized, though no name was given, spoke to me over the phone to the effect that it was time Fritz's friends did something for him. Though at that time I knew little of his war record, there was evidence of pro-German activity and I had to decline the veiled invitation.

Shortly after, in May, 1919, the New York papers told how the supposed paralytic suddenly got up from an invalid bed, climbed out a window from which two iron bars had been cut, slid down a rainwater pipe or dropped to the roof of an ice house and thence fled to a waiting automobile. The car hurried him to an airplane and the airplane carried him to Mexico, though this last step was not positively known until later. From Mexico, via the Argentine, he went to Holland.

This, remember, is recorded fact, in New York City. Yet how many of his other adventures are more preposterous or difficult to believe than is this one on the face of it? If there had been no proof to adduce, would you have found it one whit more credible than any others of his adventures with the exception of the killing of Kitchener? As Negley Farson said, these things *do* happen.

The New York papers of May 24, 1932, told of the arrest of a Frank de Trofford Craven, accused of being Captain Fritz Duquesne, under extradition to England for murder on the high seas. Craven was working as a motion picture critic for a publishing firm on Broadway.

Scotland Yard officials were quoted as saying they were "unable to recall" the case of Captain Duquesne. In reviewing his past, there was a newspaper reference to Duquesne's arrest in New York, December, 1917, charge and disposition not stated; the finding among his effects of a recommendation from the Imperial Austrian Vice Consul, Managua, Nicaragua . . . "Captain of Engineers in the Boer Army. He has in many circumstances rendered notable services to our good German cause."

A New York paper of June 6, 1932, in

an article I've rarely seen matched for all around confusion, states that the prisoner really was Craven, that the prisoner had been freed by habeas corpus on the ground that the extradition papers signed thirteen years before by Secretary of State Lansing were illegal, and that the prisoner had immediately been rearrested, charged with the felony of escaping from Bellevue in 1919, and that the British Government's representatives would not oppose his release.

WHO shall judge? To me all war is crime, and its silly rules as to just how its murders shall and shall not be committed mean only some more of the stupidity that permits wars to be. As to the facts on Fritz Duquesne, who knows? But if the things he says were done to him and his had been done to you and yours—

The article cited above summarizes as follows from Mr. Wood's book:

"To the wire of an English concentration camp tottered an enfeebled woman one day when Duquesne came hunting his mother among the Boer prisoners.

"There was," (says Clement Wood) "only the barbed wire between her and him. Her eyes were as sad and weary and sick as if she had been a kicked dog, dying alone out in a deserted corner of a *kraal*.

" 'She was garbed in filthy rags, and she looked starved, and she was sickly and she had a seven months' baby at breast. Her tone was flat as the veldt, and infinitely weary and infinitely non-complaining.

"They had done things to her—she shuddered even in her weariness at this.

"The baby had come, too. It was a pretty baby, too, she said, as if she had hated it too much in a forgotten once to have room in her now for anything but a wistful tolerance for it. A cheap, common soldier rapist of a father, and English at that.

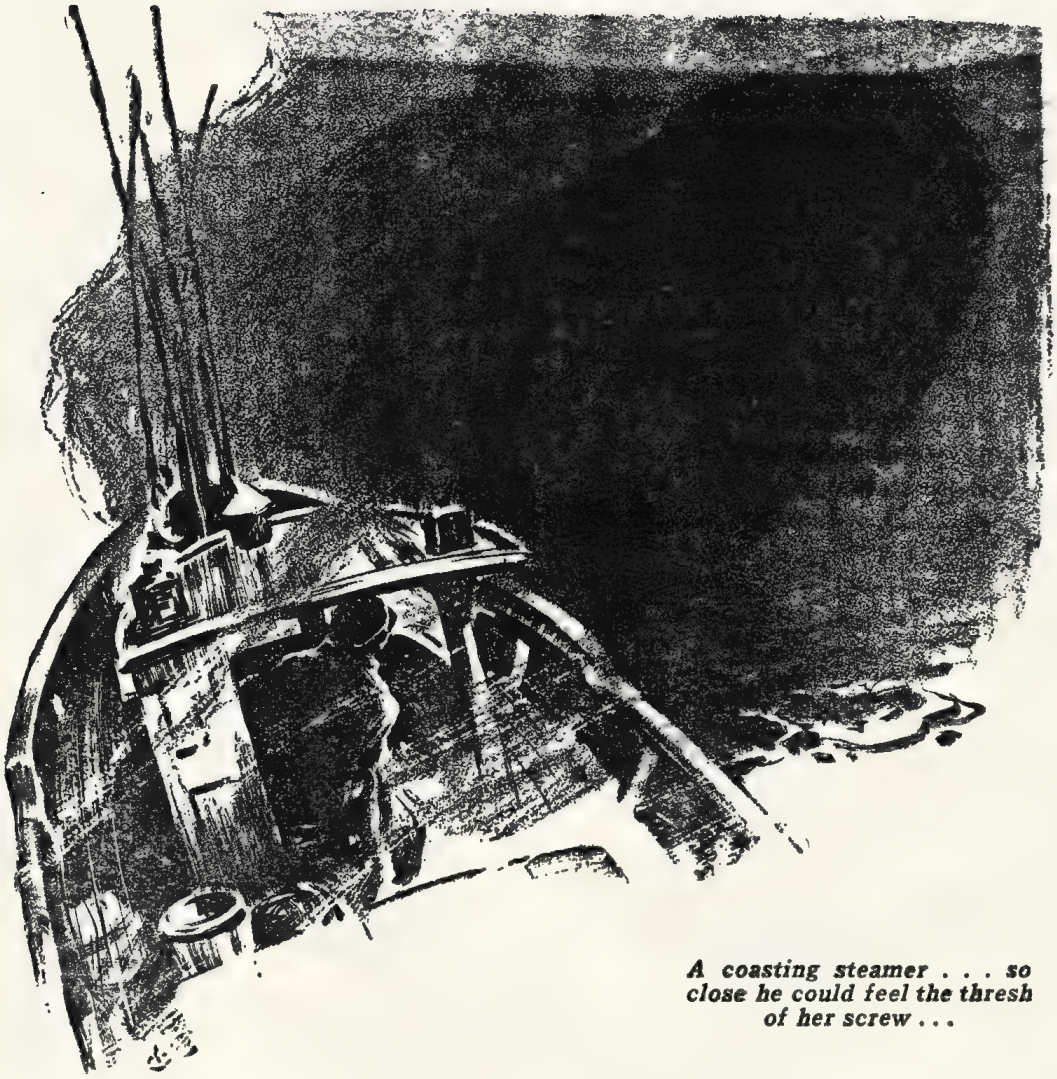
"It would die. She was glad for this. She would die. It would have been nicer to die as quickly as poor little Elsbet (Duquesne's sister) with a shot drilled through her fleeing back.

"Duquesne studied each detail of the picture. He spoke gently, quietly, to her. Then this mood fell off and he became as black and hating as any soul she had ever seen. He did not raise his voice.

"As long as he lived, he said, he would plot to pay back the English for what they had done. Most of all Kitchener. . . . He pledged his soul to it that for every drop of poisoned blood in her body he would kill one hundred Englishmen. As England had done to her, so and infinitely more he would do to England.

"And then he said 'Mother' very quietly and turned away. He turned back just once—just once to say that he loved her, and always had, and always would, and not to worry any more. It would be all right somehow."

I add again his last words to me, scrawled on the corner of a newspaper: "My dead mother approves, and she was God to me."



A coasting steamer . . . so close he could feel the thresh of her screw . . .

BLOW THE CAT DOWN

A Novelette

By BERTRAND W. SINCLAIR

"I 'M TELLIN' you, Gabe," Johnny Van Tromp said to the big man beside him, "don't you kick that cat again."

A gray tomcat huddled in Johnny's arms. His yellow eyes, slitted with black in the centers, were fixed unwinking on Gabe Maguire. The Inspector didn't know fear of man. All men, especially men in sea-boots that smelled of fish, were his friends. Two of them were his gods. One of his gods had gone mad. Probably that was how he accounted for having the breath knocked out of his small body against the after wall of the *West Wind's* pilot house.

"Don't take it out on the cat," Johnny went on softly. "He never done you no harm."

His tone was fairly casual, but he was troubled. Kicking the cat was only a symptom. That black rage had its roots in something Johnny Van Tromp understood only too well. When a partner starts crabbing about everything, snarling all the time, working up to a fight—

"You an' y'r damn cat!" Gabe breathed hoarsely. His broad chest rose and fell; his huge hands opened and shut—exactly, Johnny thought, as the Inspector flensed his claws. Only the Inspector in his sixteen months of life had never fought, and Gabe Maguire was a fighter with scores of bloody brawls behind him. Johnny Van Tromp and Gabe had been trolling partners a little over three years, and Johnny was the only man Gabe had ever associated with for more than six weeks without getting into a fight about something. He was working up to that now.

"Darn his hide," Johnny thought. "The big row is comin' to a head, I guess, just because I stayed ashore last night talkin' to Mary Carmichael. He'd be madder if he knew what me'n that bunch of fluff had to say."

Johnny set the cat down on the deck. The Inspector was a beautiful, sleek-coated tomcat, slate gray, with the black outline of a perfect spear along his back. His world was the long steep surges of the West Coast, across which the *West Wind* marched under the sun, in the teeth of the wind, blind in the fog, taking the silvery salmon that supplied him with food. The important figures in this world were the two two-legged gods, one of which had unaccountably turned on him with insensate violence.

The Inspector's feline mind couldn't comprehend what that was all about. He sat down on his haunches for a half a minute, made a few passes across his whiskers with a licked paw. Then he rose and started for the companion steps that led below to his food dish.

Johnny Van Tromp sat on the after hatch. Gabe stood between him and the wheelhouse door, in sea-boots—a bulky man, black Irish, with a black Irish rage swelling his forty-four inch chest. The Inspector had to pass him. Head up, tail erect like a banner, he moved with the deliberation of a proud old man.

Gabe hooked one toe under the Inspector's belly and kicked straight out overside. The gray tomcat sailed in a furry arc. He gave one loud squall at the peak of the curve and nose-dived into the sea with a splash.

"To hell with you an' the bloody cat too!" Gabe bellowed.

Johnny didn't answer. He got on his knees, leaned far out. The Inspector came swimming like a mink back to his floating world which had gone all cock-eyed. Johnny caught him by the scruff of the neck. He took him down into the cabin, wiped the dripping fur with a towel and set the shivering animal on his bunk. Then Johnny went back on deck. Gabe stood there, still choking with that strange, dark rage.

JOHNNY VAN TROMP was Dutch—as Dutch away back in his ancestry as the Zuyder Zee. He might have been a lineal descendant of the Van Tromp who sailed down the English channel with a broom at his masthead as a sign that he had swept the English from the North Sea. With their wooden shoes and their pink and white faces the Dutch have always managed to hold their own.

Johnny Van Tromp had the fair Dutch skin, blue eyes and light hair, and an impassive, rather expressionless face. In addition he weighed a hundred and ninety and he tapered from his shoulders to his thighs so symmetrically that he looked small beside Gabe Maguire. When Johnny got mad he was rather quiet and moved slowly. So does a volcano.

Johnny didn't advertise his intentions nor telegraph his punch. He hit Gabe right on the button, that spot between the jaw and the point of the chin where there is a nerve very sensitive to shock.

Gabe went down and he didn't bounce right back up. He couldn't. He could just waggle his head foolishly. His body quivered. His hands moved and there was a glassy look in his eyes. He wasn't unconscious, just temporarily paralyzed. There were no seconds to hold ammonia under his nose.

Johnny Van Tromp waited silently, his eyes on Gabe. There were two other boats tied alongside the *West Wind,* lying under a sheer bluff a little off the Cool Harbor float. Perry Connor leaned against his mast, watching. His partner, a little mask-faced man known as the Duke of Belize, stood on his own deck, hands in his pockets. When Gabe finally got to his feet Johnny Van Tromp knocked him down again. He was all set to knock Gabe down as often as he got up.

"That Dutchman don't look it but he's mad," the Duke said to Perry. "And can he sock!"

Perry nodded. Perry had tangled with Gabe Maguire once, before Johnny Van Tromp appeared on the West Coast. Perry was nearly as big as Gabe, and shifty, but he hadn't been able to flatten Gabe Maguire like that. They had, in fact, fought each other into bloody exhaustion and called it a draw. Perry had never known Johnny to fight anyone before, but it seemed as if Johnny Van Tromp knew all the answers with his fists.

Gabe didn't get up again. He was out cold. Johnny got a basin of cold water and poured it slowly over Gabe's face.

Eventually Gabe blinked his eyes, shook his head, sat up, wiped his wet face with the back of his hand.

"I told you not to kick that cat again," Johnny Van Tromp said in a hard, flat tone. "If you want to go any farther with this we can go ashore on the beach where there's more room."

"I don't want no more of you, here, there, or anywhere," Gabe said slowly. "You'n me are through. See?"

Johnny nodded. "Okay by me." He added, after a second or two, "You were through before you started, only you didn't know it."

Johnny wasn't quite sure why he said that, except that his internal temperature had reached a high point, and he wanted to plant any barb he could in his partner's flesh or soul. Gabe had spoiled something Johnny Van Tromp valued highly.

He had seen it coming for weeks. He had tried to stave it off. But here it was. It gave Johnny Van Tromp a bad taste in his mouth.

IT didn't take them long to tear the blanket in two after that. They owned equal shares in the *West Wind,* and they flipped a quarter to see which bought the other's share. Johnny Van Tromp lost. He took his clothes and the cat and went ashore to a shack on the beach.

He turned, with his feet on land, to look back at the ship. He and Gabe Maguire had built her together in a long lonely winter at Tofino—hewed her heavy timbers out by hand, ribbed and planked and caulked and painted her and gone to sea in her when spring broke and the salmon began to show offshore.

In the two years they fished her she had been lucky as well as able. They made records trolling salmon, high boat marks for other men to shoot at. They could work her in waters so rough that few trollers could handle their gear, and fill the *West Wind* to her scuppers with the spring salmon, which is built like a pocket battleship, and the silver, hook-nosed coho that is a glistening torpedo when he hits a troller's spoon.

The *West Wind* and Johnny Van Tromp and Gabe Maguire had made a reputation for themselves in along the B. C. coat. Heavy seas, fog, tide-rips, all the hazards, they took them in their stride, until Mary Carmichael came to live with her uncle who kept the general store in Cool Harbor.

A woman is only a woman, but nearly any woman can raise hell among men. Mary had whatever it takes to accomplish the historic mission of her sex. She had defty subjugated Gabe Maguire. Gabe, who looked as if his normal breakfast might be a handful of salt herrings and a half-pint of overproof rum, ate docilely out of her small hand.

Maybe because Gabe was a push-over Mary began to roll her blue eyes at Johnny Van Tromp. Maybe it was part of her technique. But Johnny was cagy and he had a rudimentary notion about playing fair with a partner about anything—women or fish or what have you.

Johnny's intentions were strictly honorable, and Mary was Gabe's girl. There were also a number of things Johnny Van Tromp wanted to do before he settled down with any women. Still there *was* something about Mary Carmichael, and before Johnny Van Tromp realized it, Gabe Maguire was nursing a green fire in his Irish heart, and harmony aboard the *West Wind* was consumed in a smoldering fire which had broken into flame at last over—of all things—a gray tomcat. A gray cat with a crooked tail.

Johnny had a pack-sack slung over his broad shoulders. He clutched the Inspector under one arm. He stared at the *West Wind* with a wistful eye. He had helmed her in a lot of heavy going. She had been lucky. Johnny had a check for three thousand dollars, but he would rather have had his share in the ship. Damn the femmes anyway! And damn a man who let 'em get under his skin, so that he went all haywire.

The Inspector howled to be set down. It was his habit when ashore to follow either Johnny or Gabe like a dog. Johnny put him down. He rubbed his square-jowled face against Johnny's leg.

"Maybe the big Mick will think twice before he kicks another cat overboard," Johnny growled.

He trudged along up to the split-cedar cabin. He had his blankets and his clothes. He had money in the bank. The salmon run for that fall was just about over. Before the big springs came up along the coast again on their way to the Columbia he would have another boat. But Johnny Van Tromp had the depressed conviction that he would never helm another troller like the *West Wind*. Some indefinable thing had gone into her timbers and structure that made her unique, like a beautiful woman among hags. Some of his luck had gone with the *West Wind*. Still, a cat was lucky. Johnny had the cat, and Gabe had the *West Wind*, but somehow Johnny did not think Gabe would have much luck with that ship now.

He stowed his gear in that little cabin. The Inspector he farmed out to a stump rancher who liked cats so well that his place swarmed with them. Here, the Inspector could live a social life among his own kind while Johnny went to Vancouver and got himself a new troller, a *pukka* troller that he could fish offshore single-handed.

JOHNNY VAN TROMP walked along Georgia West a couple of months later, on his way to a shipyard. The holidays had passed and January frost sharpened the clear air. The smell of mud flats bared at low tide wafted up to the street. On one side of him a busy seaport city, on the other the sea. Johnny, smelling salt water, wished he had a deck under his feet. Not long now, he thought. The whine of a bandsaw struck his ears. His nose sniffed the pungency of fresh-sawn fir.

Johnny was staring out over the harbor between two shops. Someone said: "Hello, Johnny Van Tromp." Mary Carmichael stood smiling at his elbow.

Johnny regarded the warmth of her smile, the dark, glossy curls peeping from under the brim of a hat, the fine cosmetic glow on her cheeks, and he felt a coldness, almost a distaste for all that charm, the perfume and the broadtail coat with a black fox collar. He said, "Hello, Mary."

"Where are you bound for, troller, walking without seeing people as they pass?" she asked gayly.

"Sunset Shipyards," he said. "I'm havin' a boat built."

"Oh, said she. "I'm going along that way. I'm meeting Gabe at Carson &

Shore's. He's building a boat, too."

"What's wrong with the *West Wind?*" Johnny frowned.

"Too big for one man," Mary said. "He sold her to the Parker boys. Gabe can't get along with a partner on a boat anyway. He figures he can do better alone."

"He couldn't do worse, probably," Johnny remarked. "When you an' Gabe goin' to get married?"

"We-ell, we're sort of undecided, and sort of engaged," Mary tilted her head archly. "Depends on how Gabe does this spring."

"Wish you luck," Johnny said briefly.

"I want him to quit trolling salmon and get a job ashore." Mary kept step as she talked. "Gabe is a good timber man, and at Port Alice they'd give him a steady job on the boom. He'd get a hundred and sixty a month, and we could have a cottage and live decently. But he's set on fishing."

"Why don't you go trollin' with him?" Johnny asked.

"Offshore on a thirty-five foot trolling boat is no place for a woman," Mary said tartly. "I'd rather be on land."

"You would," Johnny thought, as they separated. "You would want to live in a steam-heated flat with a can-opener, and a delicatessen around the corner. While he goes out an' takes it on the chin to get the coin to pay your way. The poor, soft sucker!"

JOHNNY sauntered down on the mooring-slips before he went to the shipyard—down among a small forest of masts and perpendicular trolling poles, their slender tips thirty-five feet aloft from the deck, wire rigging and lines thread-like against the clear winter sky. A lot of trollers wintered in Vancouver. Johnny ambled along to a couple that he knew, the *Shamrock* and the *Iron Duke,* in for New Years and soon returning to a sheltered bight a hundred miles up the coast.

Perry Connor's red head stuck out the companion when Johnny stepped on deck. The Duke of Belize hunched on a bunk, and a slim blond lad, the Blueback Kid, was making a hot rum with lemon-rind and honey. Three high boat northern trollers.

Johnny Van Tromp felt at home. He sat on a bunk nursing a drink, thinking, a little sad. He and Gabe Maguire had cracked a good many bottles of rum in the *West Wind's* cabin with visiting trollers, on the banks, in port, at fish camps. Johnny was going to troll alone, and Gabe was going to anchor himself to a dame who was, Johnny suspected, all take and no give. He lifted his glass.

"Here's to crime, matrimony included," said he.

The Duke of Belize grinned. The Blueback Kid looked slightly puzzled.

"I had a look at Gabe Maguire's new hull yesterday," Perry said. "He was a sap to let the *West Wind* go for six grand. I told him so."

"No good tellin' Gabe," Johnny said.

"She won't fish for nobody. Parkers'll find that out," Perry went on. "A boat that's been fought over is jinxed."

"That's the demon rum talkin'," Johnny said.

"I've only had three," Perry grunted. "I hate to see good men go wrong over a skirt."

"It wasn't a skirt. It was the cat," Johnny shook his head. "It's unlucky to kick a cat."

"You still got the cat?" the Duke of Belize asked.

Johnny nodded.

"You got the best of the bargain," Perry Connor said. "I like Gabe, even if he is black Irish. I like you, old Wooden Shoes. You was a good team. Somebody said once, 'God bless the Irish an' let the Dutch rustle.' Them ain't my sentiments, an' I'm Irish as Paddy's pig."

"The Dutch *can* rustle," Johnny Van Tromp laughed at last.

"The *West Wind* is in," Perry said

after a little. "Tied at the Arena Wharf."

Johnny walked over to the Arena slips when he left the Iron Duke. Stared at the *West Wind* as a mother might look at her child in his coffin. A man may look with a cold eye on the heaving sea, but he can love a ship. Sam Parker looked out the wheelhouse window.

"Come on aboard. Sun's over the yard-arm an' there's an issue of grog," he said.

Johnny sat on the bunk he had slept in for two years and imbibed another hot rum.

"I think Gabe was a sucker to sell this packet," Sam Parker grinned. "But his loss is our again. Me'n Walt figure we'll do all right with this ship."

"Good luck to you," Johnny said. "Treat her good. She never let me down."

Sam Parker told him something that made him wonder. Gabe Maguire's new boat was a twin ship to the one the Sunset was building for Johnny. He found out about that later, from his designer. The naval architect was looking over Johnny's job.

"These builders are good," said he. "They're holding as close to my lines as you could ask for."

Then he told Johnny about having a sister ship on the stocks at the Carson & Shore yard.

"It's a free country," Johnny murmured.

If Gabe Maguire wanted to have a sister ship to Johnny Van Tromp's, it was all right with Johnny. A boat, he reflected, was only as good as her skipper.

CHAPTER II

NEW SOUNDINGS

A MONTH later Johnny watched the *North Wind* slide down the ways. She had cost him more than he expected and he didn't have much left in the bankroll, but he cracked a magnum of champagne over her stemhead for luck. And with a couple of other trollers he killed a crock of rum to celebrate the launching.

The Duke of Belize, Perry Connor and the Blueback Kid had pulled for their winter quarters, or Johnny would have had them at his party.

After that he loaded grub and gas and headed for the West Coast to rig poles and gear, to get his few personal effects aboard—and the Inspector, whose home, like Johnny's Van Tromp's, was preferably afloat.

That crooked tailed cat was a symbol of something. Johnny wasn't superstitious, but from the day he and Gabe took that month-old bundle of fluffy fur aboard the *West Wind* in her second season all the luck any salmon troller could ask for had followed their boomed-out poles.

The Inspector lived up to his name when Johnny lugged him aboard the *North Wind*. He went from stem to stern, from keelson to truck, forepeak, cabin, main hold and fish-box. Eyeing, sniffing, touching gently with a fore paw, as though testing the quality of wood, iron, and running gear.

And then he came back into the cabin and sat purring on Johnny Van Tromp's knee.

Only the Inspector couldn't talk. The *North Wind* was a silent ship, except when Johnny turned on the radio. He had spent his last fifty dollars for that. An offshore troller needed short wave to get weather reports, to warn him when a gale was coming and from what quarter.

When Johnny went into the cabin he and Gabe had used as a joint storehouse, he found all his stuff neatly piled on one side. He took everything out and closed the door. He thought, queer, I don't like being in that shack now. It's like a place where somebody has died. Funny. Gabe ain't dead. He's in Vancouver, rigging his boat. I ain't cashed in, nor

the Inspector. It's bog Irish to have notions like that, and I'm wooden-shoe Dutch.

He went into Dave Carmichael's store to get something. Mary was still in Vancouver, too.

The second week in March a school of spring salmon showed up on the forty fathom contour off Quatsino. Johnny got in about four days' fishing and picked off a hundred and sixty dollars. Then March, which had delayed its lion roar, turned loose a whole menagerie. Johnny got caught fifteen miles offshore, and the *North Wind* proved that she could take it.

It took him seven hours to fight his way in, the last three hours in the dark, climbing up on dark mounds topped with white, falling into bottomless hollows, spray slashing across his decks, battering his wheelhouse windows like fine shot.

But he got in out of a blow that sent three trollers and a tug to Davy Jones' locker off Esperanza Inlet that night. For eight days nothing put its nose outside Quatsino, or Kyuquot, or Barkley Sound. Too rough. The wind backed against the sun and blew great guns from sou'west, and then all that wind came roaring back over the mountains off Vancouver Island until the Pacific Ocean was heaving and bursting and moaning on rocky shores. Day and night immense seas broke against every headland from Cape Beale to Cape Scott, making the Island shudder to its granite backbone throughout its three hundred mile length.

Then the wind died, the waves calmed, and trollers put to sea.

Just clear of the bay one morning, outward bound, the *North Wind* met her sister ship coming in. They passed within ten fathoms. Johnny Van Tromp stared. The Inspector, braced like a figurehead on the bow, sniffing salt air, stared too.

Strake for strake, line for line, color, spar and hardwood trim, the new one was twin to the vessel under Johnny's booted feet. Except for the name you couldn't tell them apart. And even the name—

Gabe Maguire must have had something sticking in the back of his head, too, Johnny thought. He had christened his packet the *South Wind. South Wind, North Wind.*

They had built the *West Wind* together and fished her together, rain or shine. And fought and split over a crooked-tailed tomcat. No, it wasn't the cat. Not, Johnny Van Tromp muttered, a crooked-tailed cat who walked on his own four feet. Johnny looked down at the Inspector.

"You don't ask for no fur coat, do you?" he said aloud. "You got a fur coat of your own. Nor you don't crave strings of pearls, nor try to make a man stay ashore that belongs at sea."

And a little later, looking back at the white hull steaming into Cool Harbor, Johnny muttered:

"Well, he's copied the boat and the name an' he's copped the jane. Let's see if he can do the rest of the stuff the way we did when we was partners."

WHEN July wafted its hot breath across the seas and shed a brassy glare on the North Pacific most of the West Coast trolling fleet had shifted to a higher latitude. Up Hecate Strait, in Milbank Sound, Fitzhugh, off Mexicana Point, and in Bate Pass their tall poles swung in a graceful arc when they were up and running. The weather was good, and the springs schooled here and there.

Johnny Van Tromp's new packet handled herself well. He trimmed her so that she rolled slow and easy in a beam sea. She could dive into a chop without bucking like a bronco, and she could run in a breaking sea, which is the most dangerous point of sailing. She behaved, on a smaller scale, as the *West Wind* used to behave, as able if not as easy.

Johnny seemed to get breaks on the fishing, too. He seemed to arrive at certain spots when there was a run on, as if timed by some mysterious clock, and when that run played out he was sure to land among schooling salmon when he shifted base.

He saw the *South Wind* many times, oftener than he liked. Gabe was always turning up on the same fishing grounds—frequently just as Johnny Van Tromp was about to leave—as if the two sister ships were playing some sort of tag game. They never spoke. There was nothing to say anyhow.

Gabe Maguire seemed always to be just a jump behind Johnny Van Tromp, and a jump or two behind the salmon. Johnny didn't have to talk to Gabe Maguire to know that. Trollers keep tab on each other. They know which is high boat and which low along nine hundred miles of coast, as a baseball fan knows how many runs the Giants scored in the seventh inning yesterday. By the middle of July Johnny and everybody else knew that Gabe had had a long run of fisherman's luck, and any fisherman knows what that is, although it sounds vulgar to say it.

Gabe had the boat, the gear, the experience, the guts to go out and take it. But he wasn't clicking—and the trolling fleets wondered why. Johnny wondered why, too, but he had a better line on Gabe than anyone else. They had been famous along the B. C. coast with the old *West Wind*. Inshore and offshore, wind, sun or fog they always got their share—generally more than their share, some fishermen had grumbled.

Working sister ships, similar gear, each should still have been tops. Johnny Van Tromp was. He had fattened his bankroll since spring. Gabe was near the bottom as catches went.

It was souring him. He went about with a chip on his shoulder, a snarl in his bull throat, so Johnny heard. When an experienced troller fishes over the same ground for a week with a dozen others and they average forty dollars a day and he doesn't make ten, it is likely to sour him. It has happened to crack trollers. There are so many little things that can queer his game. There is a good deal of technique to making those big springs take a brass wobbler thirty fathoms under a boat's keel. There is also luck. A jinx flourishes at sea as well as on land.

August fog began to blanket Queen Charlotte Sound at night and early morning. The coho salmon began to come in. The black shearwaters came crying in their thousands, feeding on the herring school that the coho follow. The big spring salmon had gone their way. Autumn was painting maples and dogwood and turning the bracken rusty brown. Johnny Van Tromp had cleaned up on the springs. He was hoping his luck would hold through the coho run. And the trollers in the fish camps all the way from Milbank Sound to Goletas Channel were speculating on when and where and how Gabe Maguire would shake that jinx.

GENERALLY it works out, especially in offshore trolling, that men single-handing it tie up with another troller. Two heads, fishermen say, are always better than one, even if one is a wooden head. That loose partnership has advantages. If one man gets in a jam the other fellow stands by as a matter of course. Men who plow a lonely furrow all day in Neptune's pasture, abate that loneliness at night, tied in some snug shelter alongside another boat, swapping the day's experience, having their coffee together.

Johnny didn't gravitate to any partner. He didn't quite know why, except that he preferred to play a lone hand. When he was ready to go he went, whether it was ten miles or a hundred.

Wherever he went, either when he got there, or was about to leave, the *South Wind*, with Gabe's dark face framed in a wheelhouse window, would heave in

sight. It began to seem, late in August, as if the *South Wind* haunted the *North Wind,* as if Gabe Maguire had tried to break his long spell of ill luck by running his lines in the same water as his ex-partner—who couldn't go wrong. The trollers marked that, and remarked upon it in Johnny Van Tromp's hearing.

Until at Goose Islands, with the Goslings lying south of the mother islands, where the ground swell broke over rocky heads, Gabe Maguire and Johnny Van Tromp went three successive days offshore in blustery weather that kept most other trollers inside. There was a school of coho ten miles out. They fished the same uneasy seas, always within sight of each other, sometimes within hailing distance. And on each of these three days Johnny Van Tromp came in with roughly four hundred pounds of salmon, and Gabe didn't take four hundred pounds altogether.

They sidled into the Goose Island fish float the last day together. Johnny forked out his catch. Gabe got his unloaded first, a scant dozen coho and one lone spring.

He stood leaning on his picaroon, staring at that slender catch, glancing occasionally at the pile of silver torpedoes of the deep that Johnny Van Tromp kept picking out of his fish-well.

The Inspector leaped off the *North Wind.* Every boat, every scow, every float where the *North Wind* landed must always be examined, subjected to a dainty sniffing of all the new smells.

His rounds, stubby tail erect, paws lifted high among fish scales and cracked ice, brought him to where Gabe Maguire stood, picaroon point in the wet planking, hands clasped on the ash haft.

The gray cat sniffed at Gabe's sea boots. He rose on his hind legs, with his forepaws on Gabe's knee, and looked up into the man's face and said plaintively: "Ye-ow. Ye-a-w-wh."

Perry Connor, the Duke of Belize, the Parker boys and half a dozen other trollers lounged on the scow. Their low-toned chatter ceased. The fish buyer froze with his hand on the steel-yard that weighed Gabe's fish. Every man there knew what had happened between Gabe Maguire and Johnny Van Tromp. It was as if they held their breath.

For a few seconds Johnny did actually hold his breath. If the big black stiff kicks that cat again, he thought fiercely, I'll run this picaroon right through his middle.

Gabe didn't kick the Inspector. He looked down at the gray cat pulling at his knee with spread claws. Gabe looked at the fish buyer and the knot of silent trollers. They all knew that Gabe had kicked that cat overboard and kicked a partnership to pieces in the act. And he knew they knew. But he didn't say anything, and for a minute he didn't do anything. When he did move it was to stoop and gently brush the Inspector aside, walk over to Dave Jardine and get the money for his catch. Then he stepped off the scow to the *South Wind's* deck and went below.

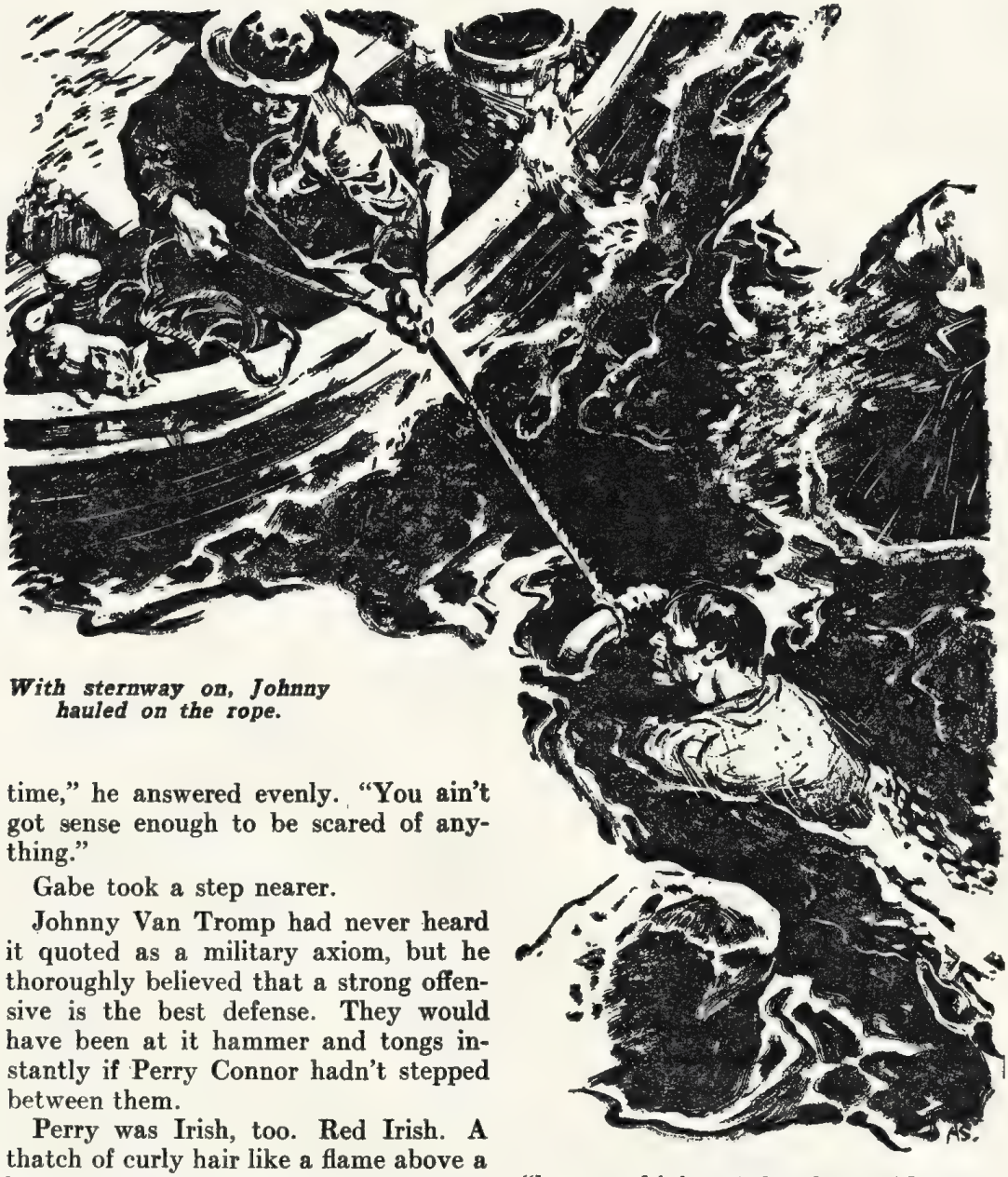
"Hey you!" Johnny hissed at the Inspector. "K-poose! Git aboard here."

The Inspector always obeyed commands from Johnny when he used that tone of voice. He leaped blithely aboard the *North Wind.* Johnny put him in the cabin and shut the wheelhouse door. When he stepped up on the scow to get his money Gabe Maguire came up on the scow too. He had taken off his sea boots and put on canvas sneakers. He had stripped off a heavy sweater. His shirt sleeves were rolled above the elbows of his massive hairy arms. The black stubble of three razorless days covered his square, heavy chin.

"I suppose you think I was scared to kick the damn cat?" he said to Johnny Van Tromp.

Johnny looked at him. Gabe was stripped for action, all cocked and primed. Johnny knew all Gabe's symptoms.

"I never thought you was scared any-



With sternway on, Johnny hauled on the rope.

time," he answered evenly. "You ain't got sense enough to be scared of anything."

Gabe took a step nearer.

Johnny Van Tromp had never heard it quoted as a military axiom, but he thoroughly believed that a strong offensive is the best defense. They would have been at it hammer and tongs instantly if Perry Connor hadn't stepped between them.

Perry was Irish, too. Red Irish. A thatch of curly hair like a flame above a hearty red face. Perry was as big as Gabe and even faster on his feet. Perry always talked loudly and always backed whatever talk he made. He had known them both a long time. The innocent bystander who tries to make peace when two strong, angry men are about to fight is not always wise, especially when the antagonists had been friends before they became enemies. But Perry Connor was given to generous, impulsive actions about people he liked.

"You two guys," Perry said loudly, "have nothin' to fight about. No sense to it. I just want to tell you this—you can go to it, if you want. But whichever of you wins the brawl will have to fight me right off the bat—an' I don't mean maybe. That'll be one scrap neither of you can win."

For a minute it was touch and go. Gabe stood his ground, glaring. Johnny, equally determined but cooler headed, finally shrugged his wide shoulders and said:

"That strikes me as too much of a

contract for any man who has been fourteen hours on his feet in heavy weather. I don't care for it in mine."

He stepped off the scow and cast loose the *North Wind's* mooring line, eased her out to an anchorage.

"The bloody fool!" he kept saying to himself as he cooked supper. "It's gettin' him down an' he's got to take it out on somebody. Blast his soul, why don't he keep away from me?"

THE *North Wind* blew south next morning at the crack of dawn, away from Goose Island and the little Goslings, and away from Gabe Maguire and his jinx. Johnny Van Tromp wasn't exactly running away, but Gabe and the *South Wind* and that hard luck which had become chronic made Johnny uncomfortable, troubled him out of all reason.

Fog hung along the coast like damp smoke. Fog whistles bleated and blared in the murk as the trolling fleet, hauling clear of Goose Island, kept in touch with each other, running compass courses ten, twenty miles to sea over a ground swell that heaved in lazy undulations, making deep green valleys between each crest.

Johnny drove south in the fog all that day, brought his groping into Bate Pass, between two islands whose granite facades bounced an echo back at him with each blast of his whistle. Sound travels so many feet per second. Thus he felt his way to an anchorage, as vessels great and small feel their way through narrow channels when fog blinds them along the whole inside passage to Alaska.

He drove over Nawhitti Bar and rounded Cape Scott into the open Pacific at slack tide. There he ran his lines and trolled south along the Vancouver Island coastal shelf toward Quatsino. Nearing that great sheltered inlet an offshore breeze rolled the fog out to sea.

No springs. The coho had not yet touched that part of the coast. He came at dusk to an anchorage before a slope where fishermen's cottages sent up pennants of smoke from the women's supper fires. Tom Carmichael's white house loomed against the dark green forest. Johnny could see Mary Carmichael staring at the *North Wind* from her uncle's porch.

He didn't go ashore. As he cooked bacon and eggs he heard the click of rowlocks. Mary Carmichael came rowing out in her uncle's dinghy. She perched on the wheelhouse doorstep, smiling down at Johnny Van Tromp.

Johnny kept on cooking his supper. Mary slid down the steps and sat on his bunk near him. She chattered brightly. After a while Johnny said: "I ain't heard no weddin' bells for the Maguires."

"You won't," Mary answered. "I don't think I could care enough for Gabe to marry him, ever."

"How come?" Johnny inquired lightly.

"Oh, Gabe got so sour. He hasn't been doing very well, you know." She tossed her head so that her dark curls fluttered. "We were always getting into arguments, and we almost don't speak now."

"You don't sound heart-broken, anyway," Johnny commented.

"I'm not," she laughed.

Johnny's coffee wasn't quite ready. He sat down on the bunk beside her. There wasn't much room. Their shoulders rubbed. Johnny Van Tromp stared down at her and Mary smiled at him. A queer temptation to put his arm around her came over Johnny Van Tromp. And he did. Mary edged a little closer. She put her dark head lightly on Johnny's shoulder. Johnny stared over her head at the after bulkhead. He held her close, and he seemed to be thinking. But he didn't say anything.

"I always liked you, Johnny," Mary whispered. "You're nice and gentle. It would be terrible to be married to a man who bellowed and roared when things bothered him, and was always so dead set in his ways."

"You want somebody sweet and kind, eh, that'd always do what you want him

to, when you want him?" Johnny murmured.

"Well," Mary said softly, "I think a man ought to be willing to do some of the things I wanted him to, and be sweet about it. If a man cares a lot for a woman he ought to be glad to."

Johnny Van Tromp took his arm away and stood up. His movement was a trifle abrupt.

"An' what the hell do *you* suppose a man who works like any troller does, and takes a troller's chances, wants in a woman?" he demanded fiercely. "Somethin' that's all looks an' wants, with neither guts nor brains? Do you think a man goes blind in the fog, gets hammered by seas, tears his fingers on fishhooks an' lines, gets salmon slime poison between his fingers, just so some jane can park herself in any soft spot she chooses? Listen, femme—"

Mary Carmichael didn't want to listen after that. But Johnny caught her by the arm and she had to listen, with a baleful light glowing in her china-blue eyes that went so nicely with her white skin and dark hair. What Johnny said is neither here nor there. Before he had quite finished Mary jerked loose her arm, scrambled up the companion steps, and bounced off the *North Wind's* deck into her dinghy. For once a man had the last word.

A cat, too. The Inspector leaped to the wheelhouse threshold, and stood with his stubby tail erect, glaring after the sound of oars in the darkness. Johnny laughed out loud and reached for his plate of bacon and eggs.

"You an' me both, Inspector," he said with a lot of feeling.

CHAPTER III

FANGS OF THE SEA

DAYLIGHT crept over Quatsino Sound. Johnny pushed out into the fog—morning fog that still lay thick and damp at noon. He cursed the murk and steered a compass course. His lines cut the smooth sea with faint hissings. He kept sliding north over the ground swell. No salmon that far south, so he headed back where there were salmon. Three days wasted. Well, not wholly. At least he had spoken his mind to Mary Carmichael.

Two or three times he passed local trollers, unseen in the gray vapor. Once a coasting steamer rocked him with her wash, so close he could hear the thresh of her screw.

By skilful navigation he came at last to anchor under the northern lee of Lanz Island to lie for the night, a blob of forested granite far offshore from which he would have to run if a wind got up.

Feeling his way slowly into ten fathoms, Johnny almost slid up on the stern of a white hull. *South Wind,* of Vancouver, B. C.

It almost angered him. Couldn't a man go anywhere along a thousand miles of coat without finding that black-faced Mick underfoot? Johnny slid a cable or so along the beach and dropped his hook. The wooded shore opened and closed in the swirls. The dampness collected out of the air and made dew pearls on deck and spar. Night shut down thick and black.

"OUGHT to let up today, sometime," Johnny grumbled as he pulled his hook in the morning. He could hear the *South Wind* moving, her engine dead slow. She was heading north too, by the direction of the sound. Johnny shrugged his shoulders. It didn't matter, really—only he could get salmon and Gabe couldn't, and why should Gabe haunt his trail like that?

Johnny headed up coast at a normal trolling speed, over a great empty stretch of ocean free of hidden dangers. He trolled, at ten, at twenty, down to thirty-five fathoms at last. No triggerstick sprung to jangle a bell when a sal-

mon struck. At ten o'clock he pulled his lines, hoisted his poles and lashed them tight to the mast.

"To hell with this," he muttered, and opened his throttle to cruising speed. Blind in a grayness, visibility on a circle of less than a hundred feet, thirty miles offshore. No salmon. As well be at anchor.

He had run courses and checked his time, so that he knew his approximate position. The glass was steady, but you couldn't always bank on that. Every radio message he had picked up for two days told of thick fog from Tatoosh Light to Hecate Strait. Fog season.

Johnny decided to bear eastward. Between the bows of the *North Wind* and Goose Island there were reefs enough to sink the navies of the world. He ran for nearly an hour, one eye boring the fog, the other on the compass needle. The needle began to oscillate a little. The *North Wind* began to lift and fall. A fresh ripple began to run on top of the ground swell. Wind somewhere. Wind would soon rip the fog apart.

But it didn't. Cold clammy puffs began to strike his cheek. The ripple grew to a chop. Nothing to worry him. But the fog held. It blew in gray streaks, in formless masses, opening here, closing there. Sometimes it happened that way. Wind and sea rose under the enveloping fog, which might be banked for a hundred miles and keep rolling in on the forefront of half a gale for hours before it tore apart.

In the middle of a profound center of density Johnny plowed right into a set of lines before he could stop or even turn aside. His bow almost crashed into a starboard pole boomed out. He got a flash of Gabe Maguire in the cockpit, looking, his right hand up-raised with a gaff, his left holding the leader that in turn held a big salmon rolling from side to side in the last stages of his fight right under the *South Wind's* stern.

From habit, from a startled reaction, Johnny yelled. He had cut diagonally across Gabe's stern and carried away both light outside lines. Gabe was the one to curse. And he stood silent as Johnny slid by into the fog that swallowed him up.

Johnny breathed easier then. He might have plowed right into the hull. Why didn't the damn fool toot his whistle now and then. He lay off with clutch out, listening. No sound. He blew a shrill blast himself. The *North Wind*, without way on, rolled. The sea was getting up a little, the wind freshening.

Johnn remembered that big spring ready to gaff. Gabe had struck springs. Where one was there would be others. Johnny dropped his poles, let out his lines. The damned fog was bound to scatter in a little while, with that rising wind. Once it cleared he could run for shore safely, no matter how rough the sea.

Almost immediately a salmon struck at twenty-five fathoms. For a few minutes after that nothing happened. Then the top bobbers on the forward pointing bow-poles, the light lines on the main-pole tips all clanged at once. Johnny cleared those lines and shortened his deep lines. He had struck a school of coho, hungry fish striking at anything, right on the surface.

In eddying swirls the fog streamed by the *North Wind,* racing before a growing southeaster. The ground swell rolled in from the west. On top of that deep pulsation of the sea's watery heart a cross-surge began to show little white crests. The *North Wind* rolled and wallowed. But Johnny Van Tromp steered nor'-west, still pulling salmon.

"It ought to clear with this wind," he grumbled. "I got to run for it pretty soon, whether it does or not. Damn the fog!"

He had a good catch and they were still biting. He hated to quit. He felt reasonably sure of his position. Yet navigating in fog a man should never be

too sure of his position until he verifies it by mark or sounding. He would have to change his course soon.

JOHNNY did change his course shortly, but not by his own calculation.

He was wallowing in the trough of the sea, bracing himself against the roll to gaff a salmon, when both his deep line bells clanged together. When he glanced up both trigger sticks were bending like a drawn bow. Before he could move one snapped.

He had hooked bottom with ten fathoms of line.

Johnny Van Tromp's heart jumped. Off that depth in those waters you could be on a reef in three boat lengths. He shoved the cockpit tiller hard over, leaped for his wheelhouse and yanked at his throttle. Hard over and gunned full speed the *North Wind* turned almost on her heel. Not until he was about and standing back on his course did he breathe easily. His imagination lifted the roar of breakers in the thick fog.

Headed sou'west again he eased his motor to a whisper. Standing on the back deck listening he *did* hear a deep-toned *boo-oomph*. The crash of an ocean swell on rock or reef. If he hadn't fouled bottom with those lines—one smack on a hunk of granite would do the business.

He put up his poles, bearing slowly to the southward, into the safety of deep water. With everything stowed and lashed he hoisted a trysail and sheeted it flat. Then he shut off his power and lay practically hove-to, the little sail keeping her head up to the seas.

Johnny was hungry. It was a long run to port. He wanted hot coffee and something to eat before he took off on that long shoreward slant. That fog might rip apart any minute. He wondered where Gabe Maguire helmed the *South Wind* so near that foul ground. He hadn't heard any fog whistles. Then he went below and stoked his fire and made coffee.

A sudden lightening made him lift his head and look out. Like the opening of a window blind the fog had rolled up to let the sun through on bright green lanes of seas. It ran in thin wraiths. It gathered in isolated patches, swirled a little and was gone altogether, baring the whole sweep of Queen Charlotte Sound, the dusky wooded shore north and south from Cape Caution.

Johnny took his coffee cup and came out on deck to stare at all this, to warm himself in the bold, hot eye of the afternoon sun.

Two miles astern a white-hulled troller rolled heaving in the trough of the sea—almost, it seemed, on top of a line of breakers, where the swells burst on Sea Snipe Rocks. Johnny set down his cup and focussed his glasses.

"Good Lord!" he breathed, and dived below. Two rolls of the fly-wheel set his motor firing.

THE wind had a drive in it now. Short tumbling seas ran diagonally across the greater heave of the ground swell. The *North Wind* slid down the face of the steep ones like a scared cat. Johnny came down fast on the outlying pinnacles and shoals of the Sea Snipes. But not fast enough.

He knew when he turned that unless that troller got his engine going the chance was slim that the *North Wind* could reach him and pass a tow-line. But a man had to try.

One minute, as the *North Wind* soared on a crest, the helpless craft was visible, rolling her copper underbody to the sky. For thirty seconds Johnny wallowed in a deep hole. When he rose on the next swell the *South Wind* was half-buried in a white smother. She seemed to hang there as if impaled.

The next sea rolled her over and under. Johnny Van Tromp could almost

hear the crunch of riven timbers. He got one flash of the reef she struck on; then he had to back water or be among those reefs himself.

He went slow astern against the press of wind and sea, still bow-on to the Sea Snipes. Ugly snag-toothed black rocks, they were, baring like dragon's teeth as waves roared over them.

Could a man live where a seven-ton boat perished? Sometimes, Johnny Van Tromp knew, a man could. Moreover, he knew every depth, ledge and rock over the three mile area of the Sea Snipes. Within the outer reefs and shoals that broke the seas there stood isolated nubbins of rock jutting above even high water. If Gabe Maguire could make one of them—

In that turmoil Johnny couldn't see him as he swam. But he did see something dark and glistening, like a seal, haul out on an exposed ledge, across which the sea just failed to sweep. No seal, but a man.

There was a ragged boulder in the middle of that ledge. Gabe clawed his way to that. He stood erect, holding on with his hands. Johnny laid down his binoculars. The *South Wind's* skeleton would make a playhouse for the rock cod and the gray perch, but Gabe Maguire was safe on a ledge—safe for probably the span of one hour by the clock. Not much more.

The *North Wind* kept backing away. The wind whistled in the wire stays, slatted running gear against the mast. The Inspector crouched on the ledge by the compass, his ears flattened, the fur on his neck standing up like a ruff.

The tide was at low slack. In an hour or little more the seas would begin to run their crests over that ledge where Gabe stood, and presently a big one would sweep him off. Right in behind where Gabe clung there was deep water, like a basin within the ring of reef and shoal. From the westward no vessel, not even a Nantucket whaleboat, could get over the shoals, past those pinnacle rocks. A Kanaka on a surf-board might have made it.

Johnny Van Tromp stared, lips curling away from his set teeth.

Then he put the wheel over and headed out to sea. She plunged to her stemhead. The lash of spray on her wheelhouse windows, now, made the gray cat flatten himself and spit defiance.

Johnny looked back once.

"God!" he muttered. "He's in a spot —an' I got to leave him there!"

IT TOOK Johnny most of that hour to circle the south end of the Sea Snipes and come up from the east. He was gritting his teeth when he drove straight in between two rounded hummocks of granite, into what any seaman would have called certain destruction.

But it wasn't the danger of that narrow passage that made Johnny grind his teeth. It was the rising tide. The flood poured into the wide mouth of Queen Charlotte, pushed and hastened by the invisible pressure of that wind. He had still a half mile to go—if he didn't hit bottom, which would break the *North Wind's* back like a snapped pipestem.

He couldn't tell whether Gabe still crouched in the lee of the little rock nubbin on the ledge. He had no time to stare. He was shaving death by feet and sometimes by inches. Once he dropped sharply into a hollow between seas and saw the pale outline of a huge boulder sitting on the bottom like some aquatic monster in wait for prey. The *North Wind* drew nearly five feet. Her starboard bilge seemed to miss that one by the span of his hands.

Forging into the clear deeps within that ring of shoals and reefs, Johnny breathed easier. The middle area was not so troubled. The wind whistled across it, but the great heave of the open sea was broken into a dirty chop, un-

comfortable but not over dangerous.

And Gabe was still on his rock. Spray showered him. The wave crests were beginning to sweep across, lifting to his ankles, sometimes his knees. He held to that jutting nubbin of granite, crouched behind it when a big one broke.

Johnny pushed the *North Wind's* bow up within forty feet of that ledge. He had a ring buoy attached to a light line. He held the buoy up and made a gesture.

Gabe stood erect and dived headfirst. His powerful arms threshed water. Johnny heaved the buoy. In half a dozen strokes Gabe clamped his hands on that. The strong wind pushed the little ship back from that ledge, aiding the reverse gear. With sternway on, Johnny hauled on the rope. Presently he reached down a hand and Gabe Maguire crawled dripping over the after rail.

"You damn wooden-shoe fool," he roared as soon as the planking was under his feet. "You shouldn't 'a' come in here. You'll never get out."

"Says who?" Johnny snarled at him. "Git down below, you big ape, an' squeeze yourself into some dry clothes. You may have to swim again before long, but you might as well be dry meantime."

Inside that shark-toothed ring Johnny maneuvered the *North Wind* to the clearest, deepest water and held her there, nosing into wave and wind. It was rising to a gale, rising to shrieks in the rigging, falling to a drone unutterably melancholy. Under a slow bell the *North Wind* just about held her own. An uneasy holding. Seas broke in creamy white. She dipped into green hollows. She rolled. Johnny nursed her with motor and helm.

He still had to get out of that fanged circle. To get out he had to run with wind and sea. Running before it the steep short seas would get her by the stern and she would yaw starboard and port, not out of control but wavering drunkenly. One such waver in that narrow, shallow gut through which he entered, and he could go down to flirt with the mermaids.

Nevertheless he had to run that pass before dark. Darkness within that ring of rocks was sure doom. But meantime he had the clear vision of day—and a rising tide.

GABE MAGUIRE came up from below. He stared at the sea without a word. The cords in his bull neck stood out like ropes.

Johnny Van Tromp didn't say anything either. He leaned on his wheel spokes. Suppose his engine stopped? But it wouldn't. It never had failed. The Inspector still crouched on the window ledge by the compass binnacle. His agate eyes, black-slitted in the middle, turned slowly from Gabe to Johnny. But he neither moved nor yowled.

The silence began to oppress Johnny Van Tromp. It was unnatural. He was quite unawed by the elemental fury all about him. He wanted to know things.

"What happened you lost your power?" he asked.

"Set screw holdin' the distributor head worked loose. Dropped into the bilge when I started to fumble at it. Before I could fish it out she struck."

He added, after a pause: "I was catchin' *hiyu* salmon, an' I miscalculated my position. Didn't figure I was so close to the Sea Snipes."

Johnny nursed the *North Wind* in that uneasy vortex for another hour. The sun was dipping. There were fierce whooping gusts now that heeled the *North Wind* when they took her abeam.

"Say a prayer for this ship," Johnny Van Tromp broke another long silence. "We're for it now."

He swung her head and opened up his motor. He had marks and bearings if he could hold her on them. With the tide up a greater weight of sea swept his

course. Driven by wind and wave and her screw, the *North Wind* alternately raced and labored. She would run on a wave and when that ran out from under her she would settled into a green pit and the next sea coming up on her would rise and rise until it seemed as if it would burst with ten feet of solid green right over her sternpost. But she always lifted in time. Johnny stood braced, eyes front, steering for the passage between those two big outlying rocks. The space between them was a yeasty turmoil now. Johnny held her as straight as he could and tried not to think of what would happen if she struck, if she even touched.

A big one chased the *North Wind* right in between the islets. Johnny heard Gabe mutter: "Holy Mary!" He felt that sea take the *North Wind* under her stern, lift her tail up and up until he seemed to be looking straight down over her bows into green water. A shallow sheet of green over rocky bottom. Johnny could see a bright red starfish spread on a rock. The *North Wind* was diving by the head.

Her bow buried to the stemhead. Johnny braced himself for the crunch of her forefoot. It never came. That big roller slid up amidships and tossed the *North Wind* to its crest as a crowd hoists a hero to its shoulders. She rode there for ten seconds, till that big wave broke in a foamy head and shot her through that narrow gate off the Sea Snipe shoals into forty fathoms deep.

A wave of relief that made his heart flutter swept over Johnny Van Tromp. The fingers that gripped the spokes shook now.

"We made it," he thought exultantly, "by a cat's whisker."

Out in the deep the seas were big and easy. The *North Wind* legged her course before a fair wind with the comfortable regular lurch of an able packet homeward bound.

Gabe Maguire said in an awed tone: "I seen bottom three times back there."

"So what?" Johnny answered curtly. "She scraped no barnacles off her keel."

"I—I—"

Johnny waited, but Gabe never finished what he started to say. He stepped down into the cabin.

After a time, in the gathering dusk, Johnny glanced below. Gabe sat on a berth, humped, nursing his chin in his hands.

THE *North Wind* sidled up to a fish camp float under a sky bright with stars and filled with the rush and roar of a moderate gale. Johnny forked off six hundred pounds of coho and a couple of springs.

"Didn't figure any boat coming in this late," the buyer remarked. "You musta took some bumps, eh?"

"Plenty," Johnny admitted. But he didn't tell the man Gabe Maguire had taken the big bump and lost everything but his life.

He stuffed the money in his pocket and went below, switched on a light and shut down his engine. Gabe sat in the same position, only now his big ham hands were clasped over one knee. The Inspector prowled like a small cougar up and down the floor. He was hungry and he said so. Johnny put a match to the oil burner in his galley stove and sat down till the kettle boiled.

There ought to be something you could say to the big stiff, he thought resentfully.

The Inspector stopped that restless prowl. He crouched ever so little and leaped lightly to Gabe Maguire's knee. He shoved his square-jowled tomcat head up against Gabe's shirt and rubbed with his red nose. Gabe put out a hand and stroked the Inspector's glossy back. The Inspector settled down, purring like a small dynamo.

"*He* don't hold no grudge," Gabe said suddenly.

"Neither do I, you big black-faced walloper," Johnny Van Tromp barked at him. "I just socked you for kickin' the cat, an' I'd do it again."

For a minute there was silence, in which the Inspector's purr was like the exhaust of a high-speed motor. Johnny made the coffee. He handed Gabe a cup. Gabe emptied it at a gulp and set it on the hinged wall table.

"So you won't talk?" Johnny said presently. "Well, I will, fellow."

"I was a sucker," Gabe rumbled in his deep voice, "An' there's no use talkin' about that."

"I wasn't goin' to talk about that." Johnny Van Tromp's eyes gleamed. That was as near pleading guilty as Gabe Maguire would ever come, and it was plenty. "I was just goin' to remark that offshore trollin' single-handed is plenty tough, if you ask me."

Gabe muttered. "You've done all right, ain't you?"

"Yeah, but I coulda done better," Johnny said. "You busted up the best trollin' combination on the West Coast, feller, when you went off the deep end over Mary Carmichael."

"Aw, quit rubbin' it in." Gabe shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not. My notion is to rub it out," Johnny answered. "You have any insurance on the *South Wind?*"

Gabe shook his head.

"You got any money?" Johnny went on.

"Got about eleven hundred bucks in the bank," Gabe replied docilely.

"I got about fifteen hundred," Johnny went on. "I can get twenty-five hundred for the *North Wind.* We can buy back the old *West Wind* for four thousand. The Parkers are sick of her. They don't sabe that high speed Diesel. They're broke down half the time. They ain't made laborers' wages all summer. You could pay me the rest of your half in one seasons' fishin'."

"Huh!" Gabe Maguire stared.

"You heard me," Johnny Van Tromp said testily.

"You mean that?" Gabe leaned forward.

"Hell, did you ever know me say things I didn't mean?" Johnny asked impatiently. "You want to troll an' make money. So do I. I'm makin' you a proposition. You'n me are too darn big for a little boat like this. She can't take it like the *West Wind.* We can get the *West Wind* back cheap. We made plenty with the *West Wind* before. We can do it again. Are you game?"

"I'll say," Gabe rumbled. "Shake on it."

They shook.

"I tell you, big boy," Johnny said, when he had poured another cup of coffee and lit a cigarette. "If you ever feel the pangs of matrimony comin' on again, your best bet is not to fall for somethin' soft an' cuddly, but to go for one of them Finn girls on Malcolm Island. Them's the kind of janes for a troller. They can love a man an' help him at the same time. They can laugh when a boat is rollin' her guard rail under, an' put on a pair of gum boots an' do a trick at the wheel. They're damn fine women an' they make damn fine partners."

Gabe Maguire's black face cracked in the first smile.

"Yeah," he nodded. "I guess you're right, Johnny. I been thinkin' somethin' like that myself, lately."

In the darkness, with his bedding tucked around him, Johnny Van Tromp had a last drowsy phrase to utter. The Inspector was parked on his feet, still purring, loud in the dark cabin.

"Hey, Gabe."

"Yeah."

"You gotta promise not to kick the cat."

"Huh! You're tellin' me," Gabe's voice had a chuckle in it. "The trouble was I kicked the wrong cat."

TRADITIONS OF THE DEEPWATERMEN

by WINDAS

—MAROONED—

This word was coined in the days of Sir Frances Drake. On one of the Caribbean group he found some CI-MAROON Indians, who had been brought there as slaves, and who, when their work was finished, had been ruthlessly left to starve by their Spanish masters.

—LIBERTINE—

The modern definition of this word has been corrupted to mean a man of loose morals. Originally, he was just a free sailorman who worked the ships of the fighting Romans.

—BODY AND SOUL LASHING—

Rope-yarn tied around coat and trousers to keep out water during dirty weather.

—SIRENS—

Ships' fog-horns received their name from the mythical harpies (or Sirens) whose beautiful voices were believed to lure sailormen to destruction. Ulysses beat the Sirens to it by ordering his men to fill their ears with wax when they rowed past the harpies' island.

"You wouldn't even shoot a man in the back unless he was hog-tied!"

RED DUST

A Novelette

By ROBERT E. PINKERTON

THE tall stranger slouched in a far tilted chair. Across the door an old man sat hunched on the saloon porch. A lizard, the only living thing in sight, skittered down the dusty street.

The stranger believed the old man was asleep. Thin arms enclosed bony knees. Shirt, overalls and vest were frayed. Only his boots were good.

"How I hate a liar!" the old man snapped.

He had not moved or looked up for an hour.

"Meanin' me?" the stranger asked.

"Who else?"

The stranger grinned. He had been studying the town and had not given heed to the old man.

Now he gave heed to himself. His glance ran past belts sagging from two guns, on to dust-covered boots.

The slanting sun touched one foot and seemed to impart a red glow to the yellow dust. Again the stranger grinned.

"Meanin' I rode into town from the east, and that strip o' red dobe is to the west," he observed.

The old man looked up with a surprisingly keen glance.

"A man should dust himself more," the stranger said.

A shot sounded behind the buildings across the street.

"You rode early and fast," the old man said. "And when you'd circled the town you came in slow."

The stranger flicked at yellow dust on a boot and uncovered red dust beneath.

"Dried sweat on my hoss," he said. "Yes, I rub him down every night, right careful."

Another shot sounded. The street remained empty.

"And you may 'a' been a cowhand once, but you ain't worked at it for a long time."

The stranger chuckled.

"Mister," he said, "I'll come clean. It's a pleasure to watch good eyes see what they see. My name's Jones, and—"

"Lyin' again!" the old fellow sneered.

"No, it's Jones. Just Jones. If you'd like it all, it's Just Another Jones. My dad didn't—"

More shots sounded, inside a building this time.

"Somebody doing a little practising?" Jones asked.

The old man ignored that.

"So you came for a purpose," he said sharply. "We get only two kinds of strangers here, and most of 'em bad—and liars."

Two men emerged from a saloon across the street. They laughed as one reloaded his guns. Then they saw Jones.

As a team, they swung toward him. They came confidently, insolently, and when they halted six feet away they did not bother to separate. Knuckles on hip bones, they stared.

"Who are you?" the larger one demanded harshly.

"I've just been telling this gentleman my name is Jones and he can't make himself believe me."

"Neither can I. So high tail it out o' here."

"You tempt me," Jones said. "I thought this was a cow town, but it's only a rude pigsty."

Jones had not changed his position. His chair was tilted far back. He rested precariously on his spine.

"That's tellin' 'em!" the old man cackled. "Only these pigs has got long tusks, stranger."

"He called me a pig?" the big man shouted.

His hands dropped to his guns.

"Wait," Jones drawled. "I don't let any man put words in my mouth."

He started to rise. It was a clumsy effort. It seemed that the chair would drop him on the back of his head.

Arms and legs waved for balance. The two men laughed. Embarrassed, Jones finally got to his feet.

"You're welcome to the show, boys," he said sheepishly. "Only," and his voice hardened, "I'd like to set you right on the pigsty business. What I meant was, you're a pair o' hogs."

AMAZEMENT cut their laughter and anger lowered hands to weapons. Jones stood easily, smiling.

Then, as four guns started from holsters, two others flickered. They jabbed two stomachs.

"Your elbows are so rusty they creak," Jones said.

The two glared. And fear had come. They had difficulty in keeping their hands as far from their guns as possible. Jones laughed, and slipped his own weapons back into their holsters.

It was an impudent gesture. Men in that town would have called it suicidal.

"How come you can order me out?" Jones asked.

"Showin' is surer'n tellin'," the big one growled.

"They're modest," the old man chuckled as he got to his feet. "If ever a violet could shrink, that whiskey-gut can. He's rustled more cows and shot more men in the back than the devil could hope for from any one human."

"Shut that gate, Putnam!" the big one snarled.

"His name's Josephus Whiteley, so we call him Black Joe," old Putnam continued unperturbed. "He and his bunch have picked this country so clean they've got to fight among 'emselves for exercise.

Joe's killed two of his own men this month. Maybe he got another just now."

"And I'll get you next if it takes the rest of 'em!" Black Joe shouted.

"Who are you that's so hard to be got?" Jones asked in frank admiration.

"Putnam's a dried-up polecat that runs forty cows and is sore because we don't waste time on him," Joe said.

"I run eight thousand head and Joe ain't got an iron or a rope on one yet," Putnam retorted. "You know why? Only Putnams in my spread. Seven sons, one for every day in the week, and they're worth a whole month o' Joe's bunch."

"Yeah, and how about your other—?" Joe's companion began, but Joe's elbow knocked the breath out of him.

"Gentlemen!" Jones soothed. "This is all interesting. But where do I stand? If I must leave town—"

"You'll leave!" Black Joe snarled. "Come on, Baldy."

He whirled and they walked back across the street.

"I can't figure out," Jones said, "how a man as dumb as this Joe can get to be head of a bunch o' rustlers."

"Always wait so you can shoot a man in the back and it's easy," Putnam scoffed.

"Takin' this Joe as an example, I'd say it needs mostly a lack o' brains."

The old man seemed to like that idea.

"I know this," he proclaimed. "No long rider's been smart enough to bother me."

"I can see that," Just Jones said. "You could think something up and then die of old age before Joe'd get the same idea. But how come he's so bold in this town?"

"Scared all the rest o' the cattlemen to death. They don't seem to get the idea that bein' right's a seventh shell in any man's gun."

"That's a lot of wisdom, mister. Only I've noticed that bein' right's mostly how you look at things. What's chances for a job?"

"Bad!" Putnam answered promptly. "My boys is enough."

Just Jones' eyes twinkled. "If I was workin' for you, we'd see right together. Now, broke and hungry, I got to join up with Joe's bunch. Then we can't see alike."

For the first time the old man was knocked off balance.

"I knew what you was soon's you hit town!" he shouted angrily. "Havin' a bit of speed on the draw don't scare me. My boys'll handle you. Git across the street where you belong."

He stamped off and soon Jones saw him ride out of town toward the west, and that strip of red dobe. Later that day two cattlemen rode in. They had a sullen, beaten look. When they entered the saloon, Jones followed and asked for a job.

"I got a ten-year-old kid who does all my work," one answered. "Ask Lewis here."

"Buy my spread and work for yourself," the other said. "You needn't pay more'n ten dollars down."

Just Jones ordered drinks. They talked. Other cattlemen were in the same fix, it seemed. Black Joe Whiteley and his bunch had cleaned out the district. They had done it gradually and with much skill. Even the best detective they could hire was unable to dig up evidence. Now they faced failure.

"This Joe must be smart," Jones offered.

"If it ever rained in this country, he'd allus be wet," Lewis said.

"He can feed himself and get a saddle on a horse, and I've told it all," the other added.

"Pinto Putnam's the brains of that outfit," the bartender said. "He's as smart as his old man, even if he did cut loose from the herd."

That started an argument. One cattleman praised old Asa Putnam for his good sense and skill in homesteading all the water in Deep Valley and laying his

spread where his cattle could not wander and rustlers had slight chance to get at them.

Lewis suggested that Pinto Putnam, for all his wild ways, tipped his father off to possible raids.

"Pinto's drunk too much and hates his old man," the bartender said. "Asa's got his cows yet just because he's smart."

The cattlemen seemed too discouraged to argue that.

"If we can hang on until the mines open, that copper company'll run Black Joe out pronto," Lewis said. "Those fellows won't stand for a wild bunch near their payroll."

"Why didn't you cattlemen get together?" Jones asked.

The two men were silent. Their faces hardened.

"They tried it—once," the bartender said. "And while they was gatherin' in Sidewinder Canyon, Black Joe did as he pleased."

Just Jones laughed.

"You won't give me a job, and you ain't got any cows to steal if I hook up with Black Joe," he said. "But these mines are something else again. I hadn't heard about 'em."

He went out and down the street to the stable, where he saw that his mount received the oats ordered for him.

"Things seem to check, Star hoss," he whispered as he rubbed the animal's ear. "But it looks like there's just one thing for me to do. Hope you fall into good hands, should I make a mistake."

JONES found a job mending a winch. He did not hurry, and it was dark when he finished supper in the restaurant.

Still not hurrying, for he knew it might be his last walk, he went across the street and entered the saloon where Black Joe and his bunch held out.

Just Jones heard laughter and loud voices when he paused at the door. He heard none when he entered.

At least a dozen men were present. Some played cards. A few stood at the bar. One sat alone, limp, his head lolling, his mouth open. Peculiar blotches covered his face.

The gaze of the others was on Just Jones, fixed, close-lidded. Only that of the one called Baldy shifted. Baldy glanced at Joe, appraisingly and with anxiety.

Black Joe Whiteley stood at the bar and nearest the door. He was drunker now than he had been in the afternoon, and uglier.

He alone betrayed surprise, but fury displaced it. His right hand moved and he stood tense.

Just Jones walked forward, body liquid, smile genuine.

"A man might as well be broke as the way I am," he said pulling some coins from a pocket and tossing them on the bar. "Will that buy a round?"

"And one for me," the bartender said as he swept up the money and set out bottles and glasses.

Men left the tables, and were careful not to stand between Black Joe and Just Jones. Drinks were poured.

"Gentlemen, I am honored," Jones said. "And now would anyone object if I made a speech?"

Black Joe Whiteley poured another glass without turning his scowling face from the speaker. The others went back to tables, leaving the two at the bar. But card games were not resumed. The man with the blotched face snored.

"I'd give you my name," Jones said, "only nobody in this town seems to believe it. Mr. Asa Putnam tried hard but he couldn't make himself swallow anything I said. I'm sorry about that. Life's not too certain and I'd hate to be buried with nobody knowing that 'Just Another Jones' ought to be carved on my headboard."

"We'll do it for you," Black Joe sneered.

"Thank you, mister. You boys under-

stand me better than Mr. Putnam did. He didn't seem to care much about me, or you either. He did quite a bit o' braggin' about himself and his seven sons and how you couldn't get close enough to his cows to read the brand."

Black Joe's eyes narrowed. His anger fled before painful cogitation and he shot a quick look at his men.

"It don't seem right for a man to talk like that," Just Jones continued. "He even said Joe wasn't fit to lead a bunch of *muchachos* on a chicken raid."

"You lie!" Joe snarled as he dropped hand to gun.

Just Jones stared at that hand. His face smiled, but the stare was suddenly cold.

Abruptly his gaze shifted. He looked straight into Black Joe's eyes.

"And I think the old man was right," Jones said.

Their glances were locked. Joe stiffened. He gripped the gun so tightly his knuckles showed white.

"Want me to turn my back, Whiteley?" Jones asked.

A man laughed. Joe's shoulder moved convulsively. His gun started to leave its holster.

Just Jones' right hand flashed. The movement was like an explosion, without preliminary stress. Black Joe's eyes widened with terror. His body froze.

"Put it back," Jones said softly.

His stare continued to beat down the other's. He had not touched his own weapon.

"You ought to practice in front of a mirror," Jones warned. "It gives you the feel of a man you don't get from his back."

No one in the saloon had moved. The gaze of every man had shifted to Just Jones.

Now he walked forward, and in his high-heeled boots he walked like a cat. No cat's paw could have moved more swiftly than when his hands shot out and jerked both guns from Joe's holsters.

Black Joe knew his helplessness as does a bird faced by a coiled snake. He was as fascinated by Just Jones' stare.

Jones ejected the cartridges, slipped the weapons back.

"Now, you yellow, bungling hooligan, get out!" he snarled. "Get fast! Get far! Get now!"

Black Joe went. He stumbled toward the door like a man in a daze. The others watched in equal stupor.

CHAPTER II

"HALF OF YOU'LL COME BACK!"

JUST JONES faced the crowd when Joe was gone, and his eyes were hard as when he had stared down their leader.

But his body was not hard. It was poised easily and loosely. And from that stance movement again exploded. Hands moved with the speed and accuracy of beautiful machinery. Two guns swept the room.

"Joe's through!" Just Jones said harshly. "I'm taking over. Any objections?"

The men heard, but were scarcely aware of the words. Never had they seen weapons leave holsters with such amazing speed. They stared as sandlot boys might stare at Lefty Gomez.

Only a squat, heavy-limbed man seemed undisturbed. He continued to watch Just Jones with bright eyes.

"Any objections?" Jones repeated with a snarl.

"A limber wrist don't prove you got any more'n a limber wrist," the squat man said.

Jones' eyes swept the speaker searchingly. They went on and gave a second of intense study to each of the others, even to the blotch-faced man who still slept.

"Ever see a dumb man who had a quick draw?" Just Jones demanded of the squat one. "And I've done you a good turn. How long since one o' you's

had a hundred dollars in his pockets? How long you been hankerin' for Asa Putnam's cattle? How many of you that was here a month ago ain't here now? And what's Black Joe done about hookin' up with a fat payroll when the copper mines open?"

They considered this in silence. Only the squat man was smiling.

"I'll tell you this now," Just Jones continued. "Any trouble and I meet face to face in daylight. Any squabblin' among you and I'm to be fought first. When I give the word you can do all the hellin' you want. But when I say lay off the liquor and knuckle down to work, you knuckle down or I'll put a third eye between the two you got."

Each of Jones' guns roared. Each bullet struck the zero of the 10 on a calendar across the room. The squat man laughed.

"How about Baldy?" he asked. "Joe'll be lonesome without a shadow."

Just Jones looked at the man who had accompanied his leader across the street that day.

"We don't want you, Baldy," he said. "You wouldn't even shoot a man in the back unless he was hogtied."

Laughter greeted that. Jeers followed Baldy as he slithered out the door. Just Jones slipped his guns back into their holsters and tossed a gold coin onto the bar.

The outlaws trooped up. Tension was relieved. Glasses were slopped to the brim. Jones poured a small drink and did not touch it.

The men drank. Jones watched them sternly. Only the squat man returned that appraising stare with like probing.

"Drink it up," Jones said as he shoved back the change. "You come with me." He nodded to the squat man.

Jones went out, unhurriedly, without backward glance.

But in the dark he stood close to the building, watchful, listening. The squat man came and stood beside him.

"Shorty or Stub?" Jones asked.

"Keg."

"This bunch is no better'n Black Joe."

"Couldn't be, the way Joe handled 'em."

Jones considered this a moment.

"Joe drank too much," he said. "No guts, no brains, lazy. If a man got tough, Joe didn't face him down. Waited till the other fellow was drunk or careless. Nobody knew where he stood. Nothing coming in lately. They need a kick in the pants, money to spend, a job o'work."

"Can you read my mind, too?" Keg asked.

"Ain't tried. Why didn't you kick Joe out?"

"I think o' lots of things, but they seem like too much trouble."

Hoofs sounded down the street. They came faster, harder. Jones and Keg ducked between two buildings and lay down.

A horseman passed, riding furiously and shooting at the saloon. A hundred yards behind was another. He, too, rode fast. But he did not shoot.

"Baldy wouldn't risk a shot at the moon except on a cloudy night," Just Jones said as he arose.

"And Joe's horse can outrun anything here," Keg added.

"They've got nothing on the brave *caballeros* inside. Bet they're all behind the bar."

Jones was wrong. A dozen shots blended with angry shouts in front of the saloon. When the new leader joined his men they were planning a pursuit.

"Did Joe shoot that money off the bar?" Jones asked.

They laughed and went inside. Jones and Keg strolled down the short street until they were well past the last house.

"Joe headed west," Jones said as he squatted on one heel. "How about Pinto Putnam? He didn't waken up."

"Pinto tries to get a quart o' liquor into a pint bottle," Keg answered.

"If he's half as smart as his old man,

he's been the real ramrod o' this outfit. Bet he sobers up for a few days at a time, and then things happen."

"Mister," Keg said, "you're so right it makes me nervous. Get it over with. How you come to pick me out o' that bunch?"

Just Jones traced figures in the dust with the dead stock of a weed. He smoothed them out, traced others.

"The cattlemen hired a detective," he said. "I figured you was him."

Keg chuckled in relief. "You're only human."

"Maybe I'm wrong. But I'm expectin' it, which makes things tougher for you. Now how about Putnam's cows?"

"I never been around his spread, but the boys tell me you can get into Deep Valley at only two places and the old man and his seven sons are just too smart."

"Who said it?" Jones snapped.

"Joe and some of the others. Pinto's always yapping about what a polecat Putnam is and claims he'd like nothing better than to clean out the valley. But he says he lived in it ten years and knows it intimate as the horn of his saddle and there ain't no way in except at the two ends. They're narrow, and Putnam's got regular forts built."

Just Jones traced many figures in the dust.

"Keg," he said at last, "if you're a detective workin' for the cattlemen you ain't a very good one."

"If I'm a detective, you're right."

"You believe too easy and you don't get around. Lot goin' on you don't seem to know. What if I told you I've been down in Deep Valley and I didn't go near either end?"

"It'd sound reasonable to me," Keg answered.

"And that you're goin' down in there with us?"

Keg now traced figures in the dust, slowly.

"You're smart enough to see the jam I'm in," he said at last. "Yes or no ain't worth the sayin'. We'll just have to let it work out."

Jones laughed softly. "Funny thing. You're the only one in that bunch I figured I could trust. And I guess I still can. Because you can't trust anybody except me."

He stood up, shook the kinks out of his legs.

"One bother I've got," he said. "Asa Putnam worked himself up a hunch I been around Deep Valley."

"You only got into town today."

"Yep. Never saw the place before."

"You know more about what's goin' on than we do."

"I never got run over by a train yet," Jones laughed. "I allus look and listen."

THEY went back to the saloon. The gold piece had been drunk up and the men were getting noisy.

"Bed down!" Jones snapped.

Some shot angry glances at him, but these faded quickly. Jones motioned to the door and they filed out.

Pinto Putnam still slept in his chair at the rear.

"Bring a pail of water," Jones ordered the bartender.

Pinto gasped, choked and fell out of his chair when he was doused. He was boiling mad, and nearly sober, as he got to his feet. Jones had him covered.

"Sit down!" the new leader barked. "Black Joe has gone—fast and a long way. I've taken over. My name's Jones. Just Jones. How you like it?"

Pinto looked at Keg.

"You framed this," he charged hotly. "Been here about long enough."

"What if I did?" Keg retorted. "We're goin' to do ourselves some good now."

"No cows and no payroll ever walked into this place yet," Jones added. "And a man so well organized he sleeps through a shootin' match ain't much use to us. Coffee's the strongest you drink

till we got something real to celebrate."

Pinto Putnam glared at Just Jones. The blotches deepened and his face became a horrible mask of hate and anger.

"Bring me that bottle!" Pinto roared.

Jones shook his head and the bartender did not move.

"It was your father that told me to come over to this side of the street," Jones said.

Pinto started. His anger fled.

"What else the old buzzard tell you?" he asked suspiciously.

"Plenty. He needs settin' down."

Pinto became very quiet. He looked at Jones and Keg.

"You know how I feel about it," he said to Keg. "I allus told Joe we could do it a dark night. But Joe liked all the odds."

"You don't think much of your brothers," Just Jones said.

"Less'n what they think o' me. When we start?"

"Four-five days," and Jones stood up. "It'll take some plannin'. Put him to bed, Keg."

JONES was gone when Keg returned to the bar.

"He didn't say anything," the bartender reported. "But he ain't never goin' to say much."

"When he does talk you ain't got any idea what he means," Keg agreed. "Did you see the start he gave Joe?"

"And then backed the yellow dog down."

"I never heard o' but one man could draw as fast. Funny thing. His name was Jones too."

"Who was he?" the bartender asked.

"Man in Lincoln county."

"That's where they sure learned or quit tryin'."

Keg nodded, and looked at the 10 on the calendar. Then he sat down in a chair to wait.

Just Jones' ears and eyes had not missed much about the town, and he knew where he was going when he left the saloon. At the rear was a house in which the outlaws slept and ate, and behind that the corral and shed where they kept their horses, gear and feed.

A wide circle in the dark brought him to the shed. He counted eleven saddles on the racks. A grain box and a pile of hay gave him a place to hide and he drew a gun and sat down.

Twenty minutes later a man entered and took a saddle. Just Jones crawled out and watched him catch a horse and disappear in the darkness to the south.

"And about all I know is that it wasn't Keg," Jones grinned as he went back to the bunkhouse.

Men were snoring. A smoking lantern hung from the ridge pole. Jones shielded it and made a round of the bunks. Nine were occupied. Pinto Putnam was not there.

No one wakened. They had been drinking too much. Jones went back to the saloon and took Keg into a corner.

"Joe figured his bunch too big by two," he began.

"By three," Keg said.

"Then he got one today?"

"Only tried."

"Who?"

"Me," Keg said.

Jones grinned. "Was the others smart, too?"

"Smarter'n what's left."

"And Pinto's the smartest of all."

"I've studied on that."

Just Jones considered a moment. "This bunch is no worse than most. They need work. We'll go after Putnam quick."

Keg nodded.

"Only they won't know when we start," Jones said. "Nobody'll know, except you and me."

'Still figurin' on this detective business?"

"It's a good idea to figure on everything."

"You're putting me in a hole. If any-

"Keep them hands up. It ain't much longer!"

things goes wrong. I'm all to blame."

"Yes," Just Jones said. "It seems to be that way. Let's go to bed."

Just Jones slept lightly. His right hand, under a blanket rolled for a pillow, gripped a gun. His left, under the quilt, held another.

He wakened before dawn. He heard someone moving. The lantern had burned out. Jones waited for a while, and when there was no more sound he slept again.

IN THE morning, after all the others were up, Pinto Putnam lay snoring in his bunk.

And the morning sun, shining in the door, imparted a red glow to the yellow dust on his boots.

Just Jones sent Keg to the saloon for a bottle. The men, who had been sullen and silent, grinned.

"You're taperin' off," Jones said harshly. "It's your last until you've earned a drink."

"If you think we're goin' to sit around and count flies—" a wiry little fellow began rebelliously.

"You'll be sitting in leather!" Jones snapped. "Black Joe's gone and you might as well get used to the idea. What split did he give you?"

"Joe took a quarter."

"You mean he said he took a quarter?"

"It was this way," the wiry little man said. "Joe was smarter'n you think. Rustlin' cows ain't so hard, especially when there's a lot o' small spreads like around here. It's gettin' caught with 'em, or fussin' with brands or turnin'

'em into cash that makes trouble. But Joe had connections. All we had to do was drive 'em into the hills and Joe'd find the money under a rock."

"You're right, Shadow," another said. "Safe and soft. Five dollars a head and back in our bunks before daylight."

Just Jones looked down the table. Men were nodding agreement.

"I'd never 'a' thought that o' Joe!" Jones exclaimed. "Safe and soft is right. He did have some sense."

"We ain't been caught or lost a man," proclaimed the little fellow called Shadow.

"Do tell!" Just Jones drawled. "Never 'a' thought it of Black Joe. Let's see now. Say you got seventy head. That'd be fair from a small outfit. Comes to $350. Joe gets ninety. That's $260 for a dozen o' you. A double eagle apiece. My! Bet you boys catch a train for Albuquerque or Tucson or maybe even Denver and go on a real hell-bender."

They stared at him uncertainly. His voice had expressed only amazement. Keg alone watched narrowly.

Just Jones drew a small leather bag from a pocket. It thudded on the table. He unfastened the thong and gold coins cascaded out.

"You and your soft, safe ways!" Jones snarled. "Playin' penny ante. Waitin' for somebody to buy a drink. Lettin' Joe find money under a rock. Five dollars for stock worth twenty. Watchin' Joe shoot your pals in the back and likin' it. You a wild bunch? You're wild as a flock o' chickens some nester's wife has hand raised. And with the same sort o' hearts and livers."

He gathered up the money and started toward the door, whirled back.

"I come here with ideas!" Jones exclaimed savagely. "Easy cattle in Deep Valley. A fat payroll soon's the copper mines open. Big ranches across the range that ain't been touched. Soft, all right. Maybe not safe, but men with guts don't figure that way."

"You're talkin' strong," Shadow said hotly.

"And I act stronger. I come here thinkin' I can get myself a bunch that figures in thousands, not twenties. I've got it all planned out how a small outfit can work a round-up that'll load a pack train. Go get Black Joe back again. Go on beggin' him for two-bit pieces and showin' him your backs to shoot at. I'm through with you."

They took it. They sat at the table, food forgotten, staring sullenly at their plates. Only Keg watched Just Jones.

"How you mean, Deep Valley's easy?" Keg demanded.

"None o' you's got guts enough to follow me into it."

"There ain't no way in except at the ends, and Asa Putnam's got regular forts built," Shadow said.

"Listen!" Jones barked. "I'm goin' in. I know men I can get, the sort that'd make a snack of you before breakfast. If you want to try it, come along. Only half o' you'll come back, but you'll be bringin' something."

Keg strolled over to Jones.

"Sounds better'n sittin' here," he said.

Shadow looked up shrewdly.

"You've figured a way to get in," he said.

"No," Jones barked, "I've been in. Come on, Keg."

They started toward the door. Feet shuffled behind them. Shadow called:

"We ain't said we wouldn't try it."

"Naw!" others called. "You been rushin' things. We ain't knowed you for sure."

"I knew you soon's I'd looked at you," Jones retorted. "All right! Oil your guns. Fresh shells. Get your gear ready. You gallows meat are riding today."

He was watching Keg closely. Now he drew the squat man aside.

"We'll need more shells," he said. "Lots of 'em. And grub. May take awhile. Smokin' 'em out will mean a heap of rifle work."

Jones gave Keg money and watched him depart for the store. Then he turned and shook Putnam roughly.

"What call you got to sleep all day?" Jones demanded.

Pinto rolled out, staring drowsily.

"I 'member you," he mumbled. "What's up?"

"We're goin' into Deep Valley to call on your dad."

"What you allus wanted to do," Shadow added.

Pinto blinked. The men laughed.

"Sure," Pinto said. "I tried to talk Joe into that but he didn't have the nerve."

THEY rode that day, across the hot plain and into the hills. The heat boiled the liquor out of the men and left them dry and sullen.

Just Jones rode ahead for a time and then dropped back. He talked to them, Shorty, Steve and Big Hank and Long Horn Jake and the others.

He did not try to encourage them. He stung them with biting comments.

"And you from Texas!" he said contemptuously to Jake.

"I've figured on that," Jake said complacently. "It must be the Texas air. A Texan don't seem to thrive other places."

"Meanin' you had some guts once?"

"Back home, mister, I'd go spit in a ranger's face 'fore breakfast every morning, jest to get a good start for the day. In this climate, now, I've got so I don't even spit."

"A Texas ranger wouldn't think Black Joe was a horned toad. Only a wart on one."

"Which makes it a long way to fall, don't it?"

"Got anything to climb back with?" Jones asked.

"I been wondering since I see you handle Joe. I knew it could be done. We used Joe's kind to practice on."

"You'll have a chance. How's Putnam's boys?"

"Takin' Pinto as a sample, I wouldn't bother to brand 'em. I've seen 'em hellin' around town a bit, but they keep to themselves."

"Even Pinto ain't got any use for 'em," Jones said.

Long Horn Jake slowly and carefully rolled and lighted a cigarette.

"I've heard Pinto express such ideas," he said at last. "But in this business I've found ears ain't much account."

Pinto brought up the rear. He was sullen, his head ached, and he slumped in the saddle.

"Which end o' the valley should we tackle?" Jones asked.

"It's all a chance," Pinto said. "Mostly there's always four at each end."

"With the old man suspicious of me, he'll be extra careful. How about rushin' 'em?"

"Can't be done. Double log walls in the cabins. Log and dobe roofs. Canyons are narrow. When you go in you're skylighted for a quarter mile. The old buzzard's foxy."

"And there's no other way in?"

"Not for horse or man," Pinto stated emphatically. "Probably places where you could get down with a rope. But you'd be afoot when you got there."

"That don't sound promising," Jones said. "How did you figure it when you wanted Joe to make a try?"

Pinto shrugged.

"I've had ideas," he said harshly. "They'd take time. But you're so damned smart my notions wouldn't suit you."

Just Jones laughed. "You're right. My scheme don't take any plannin'. It's so easy you'd laugh."

They had come straight south from town. Dust raised by four dozen hoofs proclaimed their progress.

But at noon they struck the hills and when they reached pine woods Jones turned west.

The shade was grateful. After lunch the men were more cheerful. Water

trickled out of the hills and they crossed small green meadows. A few cattle were seen, not nearly enough for the feed. Jones and Keg, riding ahead, saw deep fresh prints of shod hoofs.

"Ned Lewis, one o' them two in town yesterday, has this brand," Keg said. "He got out fast."

"Thinks he'll be cleaned complete," Jones laughed.

The hills rose higher, became steeper. Deep canyons cut them. Jones turned into one. Many cattle had traveled that way, but none were in sight.

"We're close to this rock o' Black Joe's," Long Horn Jake said when Just Jones dropped back beside him.

"So he was hooked up with greasers!" Jones exclaimed. "It ain't much farther to old Mexico."

"Maybe," Jake answered shortly.

"You always drove 'em up this canyon?"

"To about here. Joe'd go on alone. Time we had coffee boiled and some steak fried, he'd be back with the money."

"Then it might be dangerous for us to go farther," Just Jones said, and he turned the cavalcade into a side canyon.

It narrowed, climbed. In half an hour they emerged on a broad plateau partly timbered. A secluded swale afforded good feed and beyond was a camp site beneath trees. Jones called a halt.

"You've been here before," Shadow said suspiciously.

"Sure," Jones grinned. "I'm the feller who put the money under Joe's rock."

Horses were unsaddled and preparations made for supper. Jones drew Keg and Jake aside.

"We're south of Deep Valley now," he said. " 'Bout the middle. The east end opens into the flat twenty miles west o' town. There's a belt o' red dobe there. Runs into these hills. Other end of the valley is northwest o' here. Pinto says Asa keeps his boys divided. Fifteen miles apart."

"Couldn't hear shootin' that far," Jake observed.

"But we're goin' in from here," Keg said.

Jake looked at Jones.

"Mister," he drawled, "all I can say is that you must 'a' come from Texas."

"I looked at it once, from old Mexico."

"Even a sight of it will do things to a man. So you found a way in where Joe couldn't?"

"Maybe Joe didn't like to tell about it," Keg suggested.

"You think so?" Jones asked sharply.

"It's a guess."

"And one that opens a wide view," Jake said.

"This is no debating society," Jones cut in. "I'm here to ask questions, and tell you things. How many in the bunch are dog yellow?"

"Any rustler is," Jake answered. "Some stick longer'n others, is all."

"Which?"

"Shadow, if he's mad. Hank figures he's so big he's sure to be hit. Steve and Shorty are wildcats if they got the edge."

"Wilson can make a rifle talk," Keg added. "Robbins quits in the middle of a good bluff."

"All right," Jones said. "I'll know how to use 'em. We'll go in before daylight. Round up a thousand head or more. If Putnam happens along, Hank and Robbins will bring the herd and we'll stay."

"Then, with some luck, we could help ourselves to all Asa's stock," Jake grinned.

"Or just naturally settle in the valley," Keg said. "It ought to be a good place to run cows into and keep 'em hid. Plenty o' time to fuss with brands."

Just Jones looked at him sharply.

"That's an idea," he said. "Spread it. Might make the boys stick longer."

THEY returned to camp. After supper Jones assigned two men to watch horses and told the others to get some sleep.

"May be your last snooze," he taunted. "Never know in this business."

The cooking fire died and left black shadows beneath the pines. The men raked needles into piles and lay down. They were soft from inactivity. Some slept. Others were keyed up by the thought of danger, and by the idea of running out the Putnams and establishing headquarters in the valley.

Just Jones sat apart with his back to a large tree. After a while Keg joined him.

"I'm none too cheerful," Jones whispered. "Ain't enough guts in the lot of 'em to make a jackrabbit jump an extra foot."

"You got to feed 'em the notion we've got a cinch," Keg said. "Tell 'em it's the twelve of us against four Putnams at one end, and then four at the next. Let 'em see nobody ever gets into the valley and we can take our time. Make it a private war if we want to."

Just Jones grunted. "That'd help. But I hate takin' chances with their sort."

"It's about the only sort you find in a wild bunch."

Jones did not comment. He waited.

"They're all like Black Joe," Keg added disgustedly. "Only liquor or a cinch will make 'em fight. They give me a crawly feelin' when I get near 'em."

"You talk like a cattle detective," Jones snarled.

"I'm beginnin' to believe it would be a soft job."

Just Jones rose to a crouch.

"Get in there and count those birds!" he whispered. "I saw somebody movin' out."

He slipped back and circled west. For two hundred yards the forest was thick. The ground was soft and Jones could walk swiftly and quietly.

But suddenly there were no more trees. It was as if a giant mower had cut a swath. And across this clear space a man was hurrying to the shelter of the pines beyond.

Just Jones could barely make out the flitting shadow. The man's identity could not be determined, and Jones had to know.

He followed a depression, scuttled to the other side.

More trees, a parallel pursuit, another opening. Jones crossed by crawling from one low bush to another. As he stood up beside the dark body of a large pine, he heard a faint whistle from the side of the opening he had just left.

It was not answered. Again it sounded, louder, impatiently. Just Jones stepped to the shelter of a large pine.

Flat against the trunk, he backed around it, hand on gun, watching the opening for movement.

Something jabbed him in the back. Jones knew what it was before a voice sounded.

"Unbuckle your belts!"

Just Jones obeyed, cursing himself. Sheer chance had carried him into this trap, but Just Jones prided himself on never leaving anything to chance.

"Don't make a mistake!"

The voice was strange. Now it called softly.

"Come here, Pinto! I've caught us something."

CHAPTER III

KILLERS' CANYON

JUST JONES stood perfectly still after lowering his weapons to the ground. Soon Pinto Putnam came running up.

"See what I found under the pine needles!" Jones' captor chuckled.

Pinto thrust his face close in the darkness and recognized Jones.

"Was it luck, Ed, or somethin' else?" he demanded.

"He was riding point on you and backed right into my gun."

Pinto stared at their prisoner.

"This will need some plannin'," he

said softly. "I didn't figure on it."

"Who is he?" Ed asked.

"The fresh jasper that run Black Joe out."

"Only one thing to do with him."

"Maybe. And maybe we ought to get Keg first. They're together, all right."

"The old man told me," Ed said, "that if you was to ride this way I was to see you and then beat it back and let him know."

"That's what I told him at the ranch last night," Pinto snarled. "But we wasn't sure this bird knew how to get into the valley."

"We saw your dust when you crossed south from town today."

"That didn't prove nothing. For all we know, he may 'a' heard how cattle was run in and then come up here just to snoop around. It's a hard place to find."

"You're wasting time!" Ed exclaimed disgustedly. "You always did like to chew the fat—when you were sober enough to talk at all. Whatever is doin', this is the one who's caused all the trouble. We can save ourselves more if we get rid o' him."

Just Jones listened intently. He was not interested so much in what they revealed. He had been quite certain of all that. But this quarrel might bring a chance for escape.

"Who's runnin' this?" Pinto demanded.

"You no more'n anybody else," Ed retorted. "I was talkin' to Black Joe and Baldy today. You ain't been sober enough for a month to watch things."

"I'll cut their yeller ears off!" Pinto howled.

"'Twouldn't bother me none. But now there's work to do and I'm doin' it. We'll herd this jasper back into a canyon where shootin' won't disturb anybody but him. Then I'll go down and tell the old man and the boys what's up and you go back and try to bring that bunch into the valley. That way, we'll settle everything—and have a copper mine payroll all to ourselves."

Pinto sputtered but Ed Putnam ignored him.

"Get goin', you!" he barked at Just Jones. "Back through the timber. And me not wantin' a shot heard by your outfit don't mean I'm afraid to pull this trigger."

Jones obeyed. There was nothing else to do. He was unarmed against two weaponed, ruthless men. Pinto picked up Jones' belts and followed.

They walked ten minutes, through timber and across openings, until they reached a bare, steep ridge.

"We've gone far enough," Pinto puffed.

"Which proves how smart you are," Ed sneered. "Or how soft the liquor's made you. There's a deep canyon the other side o' this ridge, and a gun held close don't make a noise."

He prodded Jones in the back and they started up the slope. No longer could Jones keep his hands shoulder high as Ed commanded. He needed them as well as his feet to scramble up.

And Ed and Pinto must do the same. Just Jones considered this as he climbed. He felt a loose boulder under his hands, saw more. If he could find enough, start them rolling, make a break for it—

Jones could hear the others puffing. Pinto was having a hard time, would be almost useless.

And then there were no more boulders. The slope was smooth, covered with dry, slippery grass. He was skylighted, and they, armed, were in the darkness beneath him.

Just Jones reached the top, fresh, limbs steady. The crest was flat but dipped soon into the canyon beyond.

"Keep goin'!" Ed said harshly, and he prodded Jones with his gun. "And keep them hands up. It ain't much longer."

Jones went on, slowly, puffing as if he too had been weakened by the climb. Ed, impatient, savage, kept the gun

muzzle against his prisoner's spine. The brink of the canyon yawned, fifty feet away.

And Just Jones grinned to himself in the darkness. Little matters of perception and reaction time flashed through his mind.

In fractions of seconds he weighed and decided subjects both delicate and momentous, and an intense hatred and contempt for cowardly two-legged animals seized him. Again his pace slowed.

"Move!" Ed snarled. "Keep 'em up!"

The gun muzzle pressed Just Jones' back. His elbows sank lower. His hands were at a level with his hat brim.

Jones spun on his left heel, to the left. His left elbow came down and around with a sharp thrust.

Ed's gun roared. Though the muzzle had been against Jones' back, the bullet missed by six inches. And the elbow struck Ed's wrist and knocked the weapon from his hand.

Still Jones was spinning. His right fist, sweeping with all his weight behind it, led now. Until it caught Ed on the jaw.

Just Jones leaped and spun the other way. His left fist smashed into the face of the winded and astonished Pinto Putnam. As Pinto crumbled, Jones caught him on the jaw with his right.

Neither man moved. Jones buckled his gun belts on. He took the four weapons from his prisoners and hurled them as far as he could into the canyon.

He bound their ankles with their belts, their wrists behind them with their handkerchiefs. But he did not pull buckles or knots too tightly.

"And Ed'll have a horse not too far away," he chuckled. "Wouldn't be human to leave 'em here for the coyotes, not when there'll be human wolves waitin'."

IN HALF an hour Just Jones was back in camp. Men still slept. Keg had built up the fire.

"Pinto pulled out," he whispered when Jones sat down.

"Didn't you sort o' expect something like that?"

"I figured it could happen. You pot him?"

"Why should I?" Jones asked.

"I heard a shot. Or thought I did. Due west."

"Anybody else hear it?"

"They were asleep. Don't know about the wranglers."

"I didn't shoot," Jones rasped. "Get somebody at the coffee. We should start. Where you think Pinto went?"

"There's only one place," Keg said. "And if you could find this way into the valley, Pinto knows it."

"Pinto won't bother none," Jones promised.

It was long after midnight when they filed away beneath the trees. Just Jones led and seemed to know the way perfectly.

The men saw this and gathered confidence. Keg had been talking to them, dropping hints as to the possibilities of an easy conquest in Deep Valley and use of the place as headquarters.

But Pinto's absence was commented on.

"He and I been scouting around," Jones said. "We'll pick him up later."

The country became broken. Canyons, dry gulches and steep slopes fell away to the north. Jones turned into a narrow wash. Brush covered the tops and hung far over.

It was dark, as in a tunnel, but the footing was good. The horses could feel that much stock had passed that way and went confidently.

The wash twisted, dropped swiftly, at last widened to a rubble covered slope. After that it was open going down gentle hills. Behind, against the stars, loomed the high ramparts of Deep Valley.

"At that, it would take some huntin' out," Jake said.

They found cattle now, many of them.

Wiry little Shadow suddenly wheeled.

"Hey!" he called. " 'Member this critter, Shorty? Bald-faced and a curly horn. In that bunch we run off from Ned Lewis."

Several riders crowded closer.

"Tryin' to tell everybody we're here?" Jones warned.

"But the calf with her!" Shadow persisted. "It's got the Putnam brand."

Dawn had broken. Riders crowded in until the cow and calf took fright. But most of them saw the brand.

"Damned!" Big Hank exclaimed.

Jake laughed. Keg, waiting at one side, watched Just Jones. Jones stared at his men coldly.

"What of it?" he demanded.

"We been stealing cows for old Putnam, the dirty dog!" Shadow exclaimed bitterly. "Us drivin' 'em into these hills, Black Joe gettin' the money so quick, nobody followin' us—we been suckers."

"Sure!" Just Jones laughed. "I figured that out in half a day. What you goin' to do now?"

"Clean 'em out!" Shadow snarled. "Maybe I'm a sucker, but not after I know it."

The men joined in his anger. Jones, watching them, suddenly wheeled his horse.

"All right!" he exclaimed. "Show you mean it!"

As the light grew they passed more cattle they recognized, and their rage mounted.

Only Jones, in the lead, saw that a horse had come down before them. As they neared the broad floor of the valley, he pulled his mount to a walk. Keg came up beside him.

"Pinto's warned them," Keg whispered with a significant glance at the ground.

"Warned who?"

"Even Jake had a strong hunch Pinto was his old man's rep in our outfit."

"Smart hombres, you two," Just Jones snorted.

"That gives 'em nine to our eleven, and Pinto knowin' we're coming," Keg persisted.

"Countin' Joe and Baldy, they've got eleven," Jones said. "That makes it even Stephen."

"You got to give our bunch an edge or they'll run."

"You and me's edge enough."

"Unless we ride into something," Keg warned shortly. Pinto's had plenty o' time to get 'em here."

Just Jones grinned. "Pinto was delayed some."

He looked about. Two low ridges, topped with brush and boulders, flanked the swale down which they rode. The swale opened into the valley floor half a mile beyond.

"You're doin' a lot o' thinking," Just Jones said. "Some of it seems to have sense. Take 'em up this west side. Hobble the horses other side of the top. Spread the boys along the crest. Keep 'em hid."

Jones rode on, slowly, waiting until men and horses were over the ridge. Then he started at a trot toward the mouth of the swale.

The ridges fell away on either side. Just Jones turned up the eastern slope, dismounted and crawled to the crest.

Down on the floor a cloud of dust came swiftly toward him from the east. It was what he had expected, what he had hoped for. He grinned confidently as he counted the horsemen.

But as he slipped back he saw, far away toward the eastern end, another dust cloud. It was small, so distant it was hardly noticeable. Jones watched it, chuckling as he estimated distances.

The nearer riders were coming fast. He hurried to his horse and rode swiftly back, waving signals to the men he knew were watching.

Just Jones did not join them. He turned up the bare western slope and over. When he reached brush and boulders he dismounted and crept to the crest.

Almost at once a rifle sounded. A scattered volley followed from his men along the ridge to his right.

Shots came too from across the swale. Just Jones looked through a clump of brush. On the other ridge horses were rearing and plunging away. Men were scattering for shelter and blazing with rifles.

"I'm damned!" Jones grinned. "Old Asa and his boys took a short cut and came out in just the right place."

The firing was furious now, from both sides. Putnam's boys had all found cover, but not before Jones had counted ten at least, and had seen that three were hit.

And they were without mounts, afoot there on a ridge crest with only boulders and brush to hide them. Without water, too, or food. And with wounded brothers, sons.

"Which ought to be enough for our bunch not to run," Jones said grimly.

THE Putnams were too far away for him to recognize individuals, too far for accurate rifle shooting. Jones crawled back and, behind the crest, went two hundred yards closer to his own men.

It was all sniping now, chance shooting when brush moved or deduction placed a man. Jones settled comfortably behind a rock and laid out his rifle.

His men were scattered along the ridge. Jones could see the horses grouped behind them. One rifle sounded with a certain definite purpose, and always a movement on the other ridge resulted.

But the fight was becoming a sniping proposition with slight chance of further casualties on either side. Jones' men had been in position at the start and had won an advantage. Now nothing much could happen until dark.

And out across the valley, other riders were coming.

Just Jones studied the two positions. Half a mile up, the swale turned and both ridges were higher. It would be easily possible for five or six men to go south, cross over and come down on the Putnams from the side and above.

But as Jones considered this maneuver he saw Keg hurrying along behind the ridges. Men crawled back to him. Wilson with his rifle was one, the Texan, Jake, another. Three others joined the group and then all except Jake went to their horses and rode away to the south.

Just Jones grinned. "Keg sure wants to win this battle," he chuckled. "And he knows how to go at it."

Nothing to do now but wait. An occasional shot sounded from both sides. Perhaps an hour would elapse before Jake and the others were in position. Jones fired his rifle several times, trying to stir up something across the swale, and to let his men know he was in action.

But his real concern was with that tiny dust cloud he had seen at the eastern entrance to Deep Valley. He turned often to look, but ridges rose between him and the southeast.

An hour slipped by. Nowhere did Just Jones see a moving thing. He could find no evidence of Jake's crew.

A movement across the swale caught his eye. Horsemen were trooping up behing a bushy knoll. They seemed to come endlessly as they disappeared in a depression.

Soon men began crawling up through the brush. Each dragged a rifle. They scattered there on the crest. In a few moments each was hidden. And from that knoll they commanded both ridges, the entire scene of battle.

At that moment Jake and his men opened fire from above the Putnams. Old Asa's boys were taken completely by surprise and could do nothing except find new shelter.

This exposed them to a cross fire by the outlaws across the swale. Rifles roared from three positions.

Just Jones watched intently. But even when he saw Pinto Putnam in full view

he did not shoot. He chuckled as Black Joe Whiteley turned and ran.

The shooting dwindled. In a lull, Jones heard a sound behind him.

He turned his head to find Keg looking over the rock, and a revolver pointing unwaveringly.

"Crawl back!" Keg ordered in a new, hard voice. "And use a lot of care, Jones. I'm not taking chances."

Just Jones obeyed. He left his rifle where it lay. At command, he rolled over, unbuckled his belts and obligingly slid away from them. Not until he was below the crest did he speak.

"Anyhow," he drawled, "I didn't go wrong on you."

"You didn't seem to go wrong on anything," Keg said coldly. "Except once."

"When I sent you to the store to buy shells and grub," Just Jones grinned.

"What you mean?"

It's when you passed word to round up them cattlemen that's having a good time watchin' the battle."

"You saw 'em?" Keg asked suspiciously.

"Saw 'em come in at the east entrance. They're sure going to think you earned your money, feller."

Keg stared searchingly. His face was hard.

"I ain't done much but try to figure you," he said at last. "And the best I can do is figure you wrong or right either way. Now I got to turn you over to 'em."

"If that's the way you see it," Jones submitted. "Only with them knowin' how old Asa Putnam's been foolin' 'em, stealin' all their cattle while he appeared to play along, they're going to use rope on anything that's left."

"You're my prisoner," Keg answered. "I'll protect you."

"How? Men that's been robbed blind ain't over supplied with charity. They been riding across the valley and seein' their own cows and the Putnam brand on their calves. They look at this fight as being between two sides of the same sort, and they're lyin' up there on that knoll now a-lickin' their chops for what'll be left. I'd have no chance."

Keg clearly was wavering.

"Would I be stickin' around after seeing that army coming from the east gate?" Jones shot at him.

Keg's eyes softened in his indecision. The firing had almost died. Now a thunder of hoof beats arose. Jones and Keg heard shouting and turned to see the outlaws break from cover and run to their horses.

The hoof beats came closer. A dozen horsemen swept over the crest and dashed on in pursuit of the fleeing rustlers. Two stopped.

"We'll take him, Martin," one said.

It was Ned Lewis, to whom Jones had talked at the bar.

"The fellow that run Black Joe out, eh?" Lewis grinned.

Things were not mopped up for an hour. At last the cattlemen gathered in the swale with prisoners. They had Black Joe, weak from fear. Old Asa Putnam was badly wounded but as vindictive as ever. Long Horn Jake was dying. Big Hank and Wilson completed the lot.

And Just Jones.

"MIGHT as well make it complete," Ned Lewis growled.

No one dissented. Several ropes were shaken out.

"That was a smart idea, Martin," a rancher said. "Findin' it was Putnam and then getting them to wipe each other out. We sure got the right detective."

"I didn't think of that," Keg Martin said. "Jones did."

"Sure." Lewis laughed. "Jones wanted it all himself."

Keg looked at Just Jones. Again he was wavering.

"I should 'a' put a hole in this Jones soon's I seen him!" Asa Putnam snarled from the ground.

"And it was Jones found the way into

the Valley," Keg continued. "He knew Black Joe was a blind, that Pinto was playing with his father. He knew the whole set-up. Even told me I was a detective. He found the way in here, and he saw you coming and knew why. He even gave me a chance to get word to you boys yesterday. Only thing is, why?"

No one could answer that. Just Jones looked at the hard faces of men who stared coldly and menacingly.

"How about the copper mine people?" Jones asked. "Maybe they wanted this bunch cleaned out before they exposed a fat payroll."

Keg Martin's broad face beamed.

"Why didn't I think of that!" he shouted. "I knew all the time Jones was too smart to be throwing a long loop."

"Don't get soft!" Ned Lewis snarled. "He only wanted a bunch to nab those payrolls."

"And how'd he be doing the copper people any good by robbin' me?" Asa Putnam scoffed.

"What we wastin' time for?" a rancher demanded.

Keg Martin grasped Just Jones' shoulders.

"See, feller!" he pleaded desperately. "It can fall either way. Ain't you got some proof?"

"Depends on what you call proof," Jones answered. "The copper people, they'd looked into it a bit. It didn't seem right, what they told me. When one cattleman don't lose a calf while the others are getting cleaned out, it sounds thin, even if he is in a closed valley."

"First thing you did was hunt a way in!" Keg exclaimed eagerly.

"Yeah. And findin' all the brands in here proved it. When Asa saw red dust on my boots and got excited I was sure o' the set-up. The rest—it was kind o' easy, and simple. A crook's a crook because he's weak. And greedy. So I worked a way to set 'em at each other's throats. Saves time and money, and the lives of honest men."

"Pretty speech!" Ned Lewis sneered. "But it don't prove anything."

"I knew it wouldn't," Just Jones answered calmly. "I even saw how I might get into a jam. So I got me a proper sort o' paper from the president of the company to have handy."

"I can read," Lewis said, and held out his hand.

"I don't blame you for bein' touchy, Lewis," Jones said. "You've stood a lot. But you shouldn't expect me to carry a paper like that when I'm playing with a wild bunch."

He turned and selected a man at random.

"The back jockey o' my saddle," he said. "Left side. Jockey's split. Glued together again. Knife'll open it."

They waited. Cattlemen stared curiously at Just Jones. They were beginning to understand how much courage and coolness were needed for the job he had accomplished—if he spoke the truth.

"Me alone—it would 'a' cost the lives of half of you!" Keg Martin exclaimed. "I'm saying it before I see any more proof, feller."

"Thanks, Keg," Just Jones grinned. "We had us a good time together."

The man sent to examine Jones' saddle yelled.

The cattlemen understood it. They yelled too, and crowded around Just Jones.

"And I saw red dust on his boots!" old Asa Putnam exploded fiercely, and died.

"The Britisher's coming back!"

GONE TO GLORY

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

THE WASP, privateer sloop-of-war, was breasting through seas still stiffly heavy from recent gales, south of the Azores. Her twenty 32-pounders and her two long twelves were lashed down and housed. Along the berthdeck drifted the talk of the men off watch, and the steady *chuck-chuck* of the pumps. Captain Johnston Blakeley paused in his stride to catch the words from the berthdeck.

"High time we made home port to refit." This was Tyler, gun captain of the bow long tom. He spat through the port, winced with the pain from his stub arm, and sat again. A lank, narrow man, with pallid face and over-bright black eyes; the gun-wad and the sur-

geon's knife had been cruel on him. But a man who gets his arm in front of an emptying gun must pay.

"Tell it to the cap'n, you sea lawyer!" came the growl from Geiger, the bosun's mate. His growl hid compassion. His own stump was a leg, well healed now, but he knew what Tyler had been through. "Ain't we only two months out o' L'Orient, the French port, where that bloody business with the *Reindeer* sent us to refit?"

"That was July, aye," said Tyler. "Five killed, twenty-two wounded—"

"And my leg left in Davy Jones' locker," cut in Geiger, a twisted grin on his rugged features. "Well, I'm a good man yet! She was a tough ship, that *Reindeer;* but no craft under the Union Jack can take the *Wasp* while she has a gun to serve, you bet!"

Tyler grumbled still. "July's two months gone, with holes plugged and new rigging reeved. What with losses and manning prizes, we're down to sixty men out of a hundred and seventy-three. That's our only time in port since we left Portsmouth, first o' May, and we're into October. And what's the word? Clap on sail if we go seas under! Hull and be hulled, gun for gun, and be damned if the seams open! They're open now, all right."

Geiger laughed raucously. Cliff, the armorer, put in a word.

"That hammer and tongs with the *Avon,* six weeks back, done us this damage. Her iron ripped through an old shot-hole and it took a four-foot canvas patch to save us from foundering."

"Aye; but the *Avon* foundered and that's the answer!" said Geiger. "No, it was hitting that whale that sprung our bilge strake, and then chasing the *Atlanta* in heavy seas, that set the pumps to going. And these guns are too heavy for the old girl. She's rated for twenty-fours. These guns, when double-shotted, rack her main hard."

Listening, Captain Blakeley nodded to himself. Geiger had the right of it; the guns were too heavy. He cocked an eye at the streams of water gushing into the scuppers as the pumps worked. The water seemed a bit foul—a good sign! He turned as the carpenter came to him.

"We're gaining a bit, sir. If we could lighten her by shiftin' guns, I could get a sling over the side and drive oakum into the seams. She'd do till we make a port."

"Very well, as soon as the sea's down a bit. She's been well battered."

"Aye, sir; a couple o' plugs have swole, forcing a seam open. The shipyard oakum was mortal poor stuff. A shame, for a new ship like she is!"

"Keep the pumps clear." The captain resumed his pacing up and down. The seas were running high, and the breeze was holding fresh.

The carpenter went below, and as he entered the berth deck Geiger hailed him.

"Here's Chips. What's the word, lad?"

"Oh, we're gaining a bit on the water. With a bit of luck, we'll shift guns and calk her. Never fear, we'll take another prize or two."

"Should be back in the chops of the Channel," grunted Tyler. "That's where the prime pickings are—Hey! Listen!"

Down the hatchway sifted the shrill chant of the masthead lookout:

"Sa-a-ail ho! Two points for'd the weather beam, and she's a barque!"

Blakeley's voice crackled out. The *Wasp* changed course, and quickened to the haul on the tackles. Drum and fife sounded stations. The men tumbled up —Geiger with crutch tapping, Tyler with his stump swinging, cripples and able-bodied alike. Tarpaulins were whipped off, the guns were unlashed; the crews stood by, powder was fetched up, and on the quarterdeck Blakeley clapped his long glass shut.

"Swedish flag," he said to a second lieutenant. "Break out the colors; we'll speak her. Have the men 'vast heaving

at the pumps; we don't want her to report us in distress."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

A little sluggish as she smashed through the seas, the *Wasp* tore on, gallantly bearing the colors. The chase held her course under the blue field with yellow cross of Sweden, now plain in the afternoon sun. To the signal gun she readily shortened sail to lay to, rising and falling on the long seas.

"She's something to say for herself, by the looks," said Tyler, from his post at the bow gun. "Pity she's no prize, for she has a dry hold!"

"Migh not be so bad to have a stanch prize handy with the *Wasp* convoying her," assented Geiger, eyeing the barque as they hauled down toward her. Blakeley, hanging in the shouds, lifted his trumpet and hailed.

"What ship's that?"

"The barque *Adonis* of Stockholm," came response from a stocky figure on her after rail. "From Rio Janeiro for London with hides. What d'ye want with us?"

"Kindly report to any American consul you meet that the sloop-of-war *Wasp*, on cruise, is all well."

"Wait a minute," came reply. "I'm sendng a boat; we have passengers for you."

ALL hands stared in astonishment as a boat was slapped into the water. Pitching up and down on the heavy seas, she came pulling across the interval, with two figures in blue amidships.

Blakeley ordered a ladder put over. The boat came in, the two men swarmed up and were over the rail where Lieutenant Scott stood—naval officers, by their rig. The boat pulled back, the barque filled away. On the quarterdeck, the two arrivals saluted and made report.

"Acting Lieutenant McKnight and Midshipman Lyman, sir, of the *Essex*."

"What?" cried Captain Blakeley. "Cap'n Porter's *Essex*? But she's in the south seas!"

"Aye, what's left of her." McKnight laughed shortly. "We were riding our cables with yards jammed by a squall, off shore in the bay of Valparaiso, a neutral port.

"Two British men-of-war attacked us, hammered us at long range! We could bring only three guns to bear, but we fought her till we were afire fore and aft, and sinking."

"When was this?" demanded Blakeley.

"The last week in March, sir. Lyman and I were sent as prisoners of war to Rio, to testify before a British naval board as to the propriety of two Britishers making a target of a Yankee in a neutral port when she was partially disabled. We were consigned aboard that Swede for England and the Admiralty. When your flag hove into sight we concluded we'd change ships."

Young Lyman grinned. "That Swedish skipper was a good fellow, but the hides smelled like the devil!"

"Thank God we're on an American deck again!" McKnight swept a glance around the sloop. "I take it we'll soon be on American soil. Looks as though you've had rough acton, Captain Blakeley."

"That's what guns are made for, I take it," came the Yankee response. The crew were still at stations. Tyler, all ears for the words drifting downwind, heard Blakeley speak abruptly. "I can overhaul that barque again and put you back aboard her, if you say the word. To be frank about it, we're making water badly and not in the best of shape."

The two Essex officers stared.

"You reported all well, sir!" said McKnight.

"D'ye think I'll have word sent in that we're in distress?" snapped Blakeley, a bark in his voice. Tyler grinned and nudged Geiger delightedly. "Let

them keep their merchant craft in port or under covoy; we'll still take our pickings! If you return to the barque, I beg you to say nothing of our condition. D'ye want to go back?"

Startled, disappointed, McKnight flushed.

"Prisoners to the British, bulldozed for Yankees by the Admiralty board—be damned to all that!" he burst out. "Let the barque go. We stuck by the *Essex* till she was aflame, and we'll sink or swim with you. What say, Jim?"

"That goes for me," exclaimed Lyman. Captain Blakeley smiled.

"Good! As I expected. Gentlemen, welcome to the *Wasp*. She's cursed short-handed. I promise that I'll put you aboard the next prize for the United States. We'll talk further in the cabin."

Geiger, on his crutch, piped down. The pumps were manned again. The men off watch flaked their tobacco, idled, talked, as before. The afternoon was waning into evening. Tyler, inwardly damning the hurt of his arm, nodded to the others.

"Did ye hear about the *Essex?* She fought in stays in a neutral harbor hammered, afire—"

"Hell! We'd do the same, wouldn't we?" said someone.

Geiger grunted. "Hard luck for them two who come aboard. I'm wondering how they'll like the sound o' the pumps. And what they'll say when they learn we're bound on a long reach to pick up another prize or two."

Mark Requa, scarce twenty, who had left his bride looking to sea from the Portsmouth wharf, spoke out.

"Gawd! Why warn't that barque a Britisher? Then like as not we'd be home bound along of her, to refit. Or else into some port handy."

Tyler's voice blared out, bitter with scorn and pain. It irked him that the others could not see the situation as he saw it.

"Aye, another blasted neutral port, where we'd be treated like the *Essex!* Or the *Armstrong* back at Fayal! Mind that Portuguese craft that gave us warning—the *Armstrong* cut out at moorings, burned and scuttled, officers and crew taking to the shore when the fighting was done? Same with us. The *Wasp,* sighted at moorings in any port, would draw British sail like a whale belly-up draws sharks! Our one and only chance is to make a home port."

"A far cry," muttered young Requa, "wi' the pumps a-squealing like mad! Any port, says I; any port except that of Davy Jones! I got something to live for."

Tyler spat, but Geiger nodded amiably at the young fellow. Rugged, weathered Geiger had a big heart; he could understand. Tyler felt ashamed of his own savage temper, and left the group. Something to live for, indeed! Worn to the bone, half starved, arm shot off and hurting like all hell—what was life worth, anyhow?

THE *Wasp* labored on through the night, all hands fired to new exertions by the hopeful report of Chips. They all stood shifts at the pumps, even the cripples, for she was short-handed; yet every man demanded his share. Good men, those.

It was the close of another day, with a gray tossing sea. Hammocks had been slung, but a new sound reached the clump of men on the berthdeck. Their gabble ceased abruptly. Tyler, who had caught the choked sputter of the pumps, cursed anew.

"Hell! The oakum's working through into the pumps—"

"Sail ho! Sa-a-ail ho!" drifted down the long yell. Lieutenant Scott's voice came bawling down the hatchway as the scramble began.

"All hands to muster on deck!"

Geiger"s whistle shrilled. When Tyler tumbled up he saw that Blakeley headed

the officers at the quarterdeck rail, facing the muster in the waist. Blakeley's voice was pitched level, but had a hard ring that thrilled the gun-captain.

"Lads, oakum is working through and fouling the pumps. The carpenter will clear them; barring a gale, the *Wasp* will keep afloat right enough. We can throw the guns overboard and lighten her, putting for Fayal of the Azores or for the Verdes, about two hundred miles by reckoning. With the *Wasp* dismantled and lying in a Portuguese harbor, she's meat for a British boarding party. The *Armstrong's* hulk lies at Fayal, and we've two officers here who know what happened to the *Essex* at Valparaiso. D'ye get the choice?"

"Aye, sir," spoke up Geiger. "It's founder at sea or be cut out at moorings."

"But we'd get ashore, at least," added young Requa.

"In a foreign port, with no ship, and the British hot after us," Captain Blakeley answered. "There's a sail yonder, apparently a Britisher. A prize for the taking, lads! And if we have to abandon the *Wasp*, we'll still have a keel under us and the home port waiting."

Tyler led the quick, savage burst of cheers, and the *Wasp* bore away in chase of the sail that lifted wan and distant in the drab half-light.

The pumps were cleared of the oakum and sucked strongly once again. Showing no lights and with ports closed, the *Wasp* surged on under press of canvas, shuddering now and again like a dying horse, as though knowing her hours were short.

Tyler shifted restlessly as he huddled with his gun crew beside the long tom in the bows where the spray came flying over the forecastle. They were all impatient for the call that would bring them to their feet, at quarters, for action. His stub of an arm nagged him with dull throbs; it needed better attention than that afforded by the sickbay aboard the *Wasp*. The surgeon was gone with the worse wounded on a prize. The assistant surgeon had done his best, but the medicine chest lacked. He had hinted of the knife afresh, barring surgical advice to be obtained from a prize or in port.

"Hey, lads!" Geiger came stumping forward. "We're closing in on her fast, and she looks like a big 'un!"

The yellow stern lights of the chase were twinkling in the gloom, other lights glimmered above decks, her side was blank with no showing of ports; she bulked high and dark as she loomed against the bleak low horizon. Black clouds rolled and raced through the sky, flinging the half-moon from maw to maw, swallowing it, spewing it out again.

"Big as a fifty-six—a frigate she is!" declared Tyler, peering.

"No frigate, by her trim," said Geiger. "Indiaman, to my eye. But what difference? We've sent prizes home in plenty, and money's waiting for us ashore. And no time to waste here, neither. It's broadside for broadside, yardarm to yardarm, boarders away and be done, afore we're awash and sinking."

"That's *Wasp* talk," approved Tyler grimly. "We've outsailed their seventy-fours, outfought their lesser craft, and cleaned their Channel. Now for a last big 'un and hurry for home!"

Young Mark Requa turned on them in a blether.

"We can't outsail no seventy-four now. She's slow, that ship, but she's big and she can fight. Broadsides, you say? Hear what Johnny Chips said? Every round will rack our seams, and we'll go down by our own guns! If she draws away from us, in a night sea and a gale brewing—"

"Stow it!" rasped Tyler. "She'll not draw away once grapnels are fast. And what if she does? Better a deep sea than British hatches, and a rotten prison-hulk for next port!"

CLOSER now, and closer. A three-decker, towering with royals set; but no ship of war by the trim of her yards and the blunted lines of her hull. The fitful moonlight picked out the red merchant ensign and the Union Jack.

Tyler cursed softly, knowing what this meant; she was under royal charter, either a packet or a troop ship, with royal navy rating. She would be well manned, well armed. The mutters of the other men told him that they too perceived the fact.

And now, suddenly, she was alive and alarmed. Shouts rang from her, and the shrill dancing notes of a bosun's pipe. Hurrying lights flashed out fore and aft along her decks—battle lanterns, by their cages. Up went her lower yards, triced in a jiffy, and her blank sides blossomed into glowing light as ports fell open—a row of them, eight in all, gundeck inside glittering from other lanterns there. Across the water belched a trumpeted hail from her shrouds.

"Ahoy! What ship is that?"

"Stations!" The order was passed with no beat to quarters. "Silence the pumps. Hoist the grapnels." The kedge anchors rose to the lowered yardarms and dangled there.

Again the hail. "What ship is that? Keep off or we'll fire into you!"

No aswer. The Britisher's rail was dotted with heads, there was a glint of uniforms. British troops, bayonets!

"By Gawd, she's too big for us!" blurted out Mark Requa.

"Naught's too big once we're hooked fast and the *Wasp* going down," rasped Tyler. "Quick about it, lads!"

They were loading now. Nathan Lee, sponger, and Hank Bard stowed home a bag of grape, then another atop it. The *Wasp* was drawing in abreast of her prey.

Tyler squinted along the gun, to hold the muzzle upon the bulwarks above that row of open ports—smash her bulwarks and clean her rails was the motto. He thought the deck of the *Wasp* had an odd list, and motioned Perkins, the match man.

"Up wi' the screw a trifle."

A cautious turn or two and the muzzle was depressed. The match was glowing, lighted, ready. Tyler glanced back along the deck. Other gun crews were posted ready, waiting for the larboard battery to bear. The long tom, swivel mounted, needed not to wait. Matches glowed, powder passers waited with the next cartridges clasped to their chest.

"Remember the *Essex,* men!" That was Midshipman Lyman, now acting captain of the first division. Then came Blakeley's voice from the quarterdeck, repeated, passed on:

"Give her the answer—fire!"

Perkins laid the match. The long twelve burst forth flame and smoke and whistling grape. The carronades came to bear; their broadside crashed, and Tyler felt the deck shake under him —felt it shake and weave and ripple.

"Again! Quick with it, lads—"

The retort came, as the ports of the other ship billowed with flame-split smoke. The *Wasp* reeled. Stays snapped, splinters flew from her rails, a man screamed and came plunging down from the rigging to the deck. That fire had been high.

The ships were closing, Tyler worked like mad, depressing the muzzle of his gun. The men worked like mad, loading and firing. The *Wasp* was in a blaze as the pieces were served. Tyler cursed as he saw that the fire from the carronades was going high. The lower rigging and canvas of the Britisher were ragged in the spasms of moonlight, but none of her sticks were down.

Furious alarm gripped at Tyler. He found suddenly that the *Wasp* had a list to starboard. The deck was slanting, the gun was pointing up—the screw was tight down at the last thread. Now it was either grapple and board, or wear

to bring the starboard battery into action. Almost within grapnel distance —almost, but not quite. And now she was drawing away. A yelp broke from Requa.

"She's pulling off!"

Muskets were rattling. The guns of the *Wasp* had ceased to fire. The ports of the ship were being closed, her lights were gliding past, her stern lights were opening. By the Lord, she was drawing away—or the *Wasp* had slowed down!

Slow to meet her helm, the Wasp lay canted. The pumps were clanking frantically. The carpenter came forward, panting.

"It's the recoil of the guns," he grunted, as he peered over the rail beside Tyler. "The starboard battery'll be awash in no time. Another broadside finishes her, unless we can get her righted—"

"The Britisher's coming back!" went up the yell.

The stern lights swung about in an arc and faded from sight. The forecastle light, the array of battle lanterns, revealed that she was headed back. The *Wasp* righted slightly, the cant of the deck was less; but Tyler suppressed a groan as he saw that the gun-muzzles still pointed skyward.

"ALL hands to attention!" The pipe and the hoarse voice of Geiger summoned them.

Sweating, panting, balanced to the sluggish rolls of the *Wasp,* with the ominous lurch caused by the water below, the creak of timbers, the furious quick-march of the clanking pumps—Tyler faced his gun-crew at the captain. Blakeley spoke abruptly and to the point, a fury of desperation in his voice.

"Men, I figure she's a transport for Malta; she's coming back to speak us. Will you strike and go aboard for a British prison. If she comes to larboard, we can't engage her. If we can drift into her, we may still board her. As for me, I'll not leave the *Wasp* while I have a plank under me. If she rights and the pumps keep clear, we may save her yet. There's one boat left. Those who wish to cry quarter, speak up!"

An instant of silence. Tyler saw young Requa stir and move, and bawled out hot and hoarse to get ahead of any cry there.

"Sink or swim with you, by the Eternal! We're with you, sir!"

A cheer volleyed up.

"Ease off the pumps," ordered Blakeley. "Stand by to board."

The ship bore down, a great shape dimly a-twinkle under the clouded moon. To braced yards, the *Wasp* sidled for her, but the space was still wide and black when a hail came.

"This is His Majesty's ship *Royal George,* for Malta. What ship is that?"

"The *Glorious!*" shouted Blakeley in a wild voice.

"Where from, and where bound?"

"From Yankee Doodle to Davy Jones!" yelled somebody, and a laugh went up.

"Keep off or we'll sink you! Do you strike? Is that a white flag? Answer!"

White flag? God forbid! The moon had slipped out for an instant. A chorus of oaths sounded. Tyler looked and saw Requa springing for the forecastle, a white rag in his hand.

With one furious leap, Tyler was after him, overtaking him, jerking him back with one good arm about his neck, pitching him down among the men. Again came the hail.

"Do you strike?"

"I'll come aboard to report," responded Blakeley, desperately striving for time.

The *Wasp* was stealing in and in. The men crouched along the bulwarks. Tyler's grip tightened on the hilt of his cutlass as he waited. High and black towered the ship above. A woman cried out from her depths, a child's voice made a quaver in the night. Then orders

crackled, hasty and imperative.

Blocks squealed, yards swung; she was filling away, she was bound on into the night and gone. A hoarse, wild shout of despair burst from Tyler. Other men joined in it, with impotent rage, defiance, farewell. Their chance was gone. Then the calm voice of Blakeley, calm with utter despair, lifted at them.

"Man the pumps, lads. Shift over the starboard guns. We're done with fighting."

Not done with work though. They fell to, one and all, slapping and sliding across the deck, hauling at the gun tackles while the pumps clanked and clicked. Slowly she righted, but Tyler, listening and looking, perceived the truth.

She was low in the water, with scant freeboard, and the gurgles from inside her were ominous. More, the pumps were going useless. That damned oakum was in them again, stopping them.

"Mister Scott!" came Blakeley's voice. "Let the men draw lots for the boat."

Lieutenant Scott came among them, came to Tyler, spoke.

"To hell with the boat!" said Tyler. "With a gale rising, and the *Wasp* still afloat? Not us, sir. We're all bound on the same cruise together."

A growl and a panting mutter seconded his words. Even young Requa, his panic gone now, spoke up heartily, and Tyler patted the lad's shoulder in mute approval.

She was settling gently, taking it easily as though not afraid, while the surging water whispered to her and bubbles broke in tinkles along her side, and waves curled in at the open ports as though signaling her to come. Again, and for the last time, Tyler heard that calm voice from the quarterdeck.

"Have the drummer beat a ruffle."

The drum rolled. The moon broke out. The flag at the main was clear; Blakeley and his officers were looking up at it, heads bared. Down on the deck, all hands stood at attention. The light faded, the clouds rolled over the moon, darkness came down.

"Deck's awash," said Geiger, upright on his crutch. "Gone to glory, lads! Me to get my leg, you to get your arm, Tyler. That's more'n prize money would buy—"

Gone to glory! Tyler felt a warmth, within and without, as the cold water rose with a surge. His stump had ceased hurting now. All of them, together, a goodly ship's company of men unafraid and unbeaten at the last—at the last, which should be the beginning and not the end.

"I know you want to see me hung . . ."

THE REDHEAD *from* TULLUCO

Conclusion

By GORDON YOUNG

WHEN Red Clark rode into Nelplaid to take over the Lazy Z spread, he thought it looked like a peaceful town. For five minutes, that thought lasted. And then things happened—plenty!

Sam Clayton, a leading rancher, was shot down from ambush directly in front of him, and because Sam's daughter seemed in danger, Red took a hand in the game. When the smoke had cleared, four men lay sprawled in the dusty street, and Red was on the way to become a Nelplaid legend—because he had escaped unscratched!

Old Judge Trowbridge of Nelplaid had hired Red because he was the son of one of the West's best lawmen. After sizing up the situation, he knew that he would have to earn his pay. For the owner of the Lazy Z, who had inherited it sight unseen, had made it plain that Red would have to whip it into shape practically single-handed. Which would be bad enough under normal conditions, and in this case impossible—cattle were disappearing without a trace, and there was clear evidence that a rustling ring was operating under the thinly guised protection of the law itself.

Red tracked some stolen cattle to the ranch of Frank Knox, a neighboring

cowman, confronted him with the evidence and took him back to jail—and within a few hours he was free on bail and laughing at him.

"I've brought in my last rustler alive," Red told them grimly. "The next one comes in belly down, under a diamond hitch!"

And suddenly, just when he was ready to show them some fancy one-man fighting, all his battle plans were thrown into confusion. For the owner of the Lazy Z appeared on the scene—and J. C. Alvord was a woman!

Red convinced her that it was a case of fight or perish, and the events of the next few days proved him right. Almost within the boundaries of the ranch, he was attacked by an armed band, and escaped only through the intervention of Kilco, an outlaw, who helped him fight them off.

In the fight Kilco was badly wounded and Red brought him to the Lazy Z for care. Here arose a serious complication. How could he invoke the aid of the law, when he was breaking it himself by harboring a badly wanted man?

Red and his new boss quickly saw that unseen hands were losing no time in shaping their ruin. It wasn't two days later that two Wells-Fargo men and the marshal rode up—out to capture Kilco dead or alive.

By a ruse Red managed to hide Kilco, who was in love with Kate Clayton. But his foes exacted terrible vengeance for the act. That very night the two Lazy Z hands who escorted Kate back to her ranch were trapped and slain, and Kate was taken prisoner.

Red discovered the bodies, tracked down Knox and made him confess his share of the plot, and from him learned that the girl was held by Mell Barber, a rustler. He shot it out with the gang, killed three and brought Barber back, wounded and a prisoner.

And with the gallows waiting, Barber talked. But what he said only confirmed suspicions that had been plaguing Red all along. Sam Clayton had been killed—if Barber's story were true—by direct orders of his own son, Kate's brother. And Kate herself had been kidnaped by young Clayton's ally!

There was only one way to clear up the matter, and it had to be cleared up if the Lazy Z were to survive. Red packed Barber on a horse and with one old man backing his play rode into town—straight into the guns of the murder ring!

IT WAS well after supper time when Red left Mr. Backman and Barber some hundred yards in the dip of an arroyo outside of town and rode on.

He went straight to the back of the Saginaw Restaurant and clattered into the kitchen, where Mr. Blanton, Prop., sat sucking an old pipe and watching the Chinese cook peel boiled potatoes for tomorrow morning's hash.

"Sure," said Mr. Blanton welcomingly as Red stamped in, "we'll fix you a bite, if—"

"I got some business. Where's Jody?"

"In bed back there with that dog," said Mr. Blanton, grinning as if not greatly displeased and tapping the pipe bowl against his heel.

Red dipped his fingers into the pan of sliced potatoes. "I wonder if he wants to earn himself a dollar?"

"Jody? Shorest thing! You know, I was just settin' here thinkin' this country is no place for to bring up a boy. No lakes. No cricks. No trees. No fishin'! I tell you, I git mighty homesick for some green! An' all little Jody does is run around in the dust an' listen to men cuss and talk about killin's. I think I ain't doin' my honest duty to raise a boy out in this God forsaken country."

Red snorted. "You give Jody to me for a spell. I'll put him to work where there is trees and fishin' and a real old Injun-fighter to teach him things, and a

nice woman to tuck him in his bunk."

"Jody?"

"Jody. Only tonight—" Red took some more sliced boiled potatoes—"I want him for a special scoutin' job. And I'll pay him a dollar."

"You mean," said Mr. Blanton standing up and staring hard, "you want to take Jody to your ranch for to work?"

"For to play. He'll draw some wages a little and he'll work, only he'll think it is play. I'm bossin' two ranches now and I need me some good men."

"Two?"

"The Clayton outfit."

"Why that's the biggest ranch in the whole danged country!"

"That's why maybe I need me a good helper."

"You are jokin'," said Mr. Blanton.

"I may be jokin' but I ain't lyin'. I got special need for a kid of about Jody's size out where they is a lonesome woman who is dyin' to squeeze somebody. She won't squeeze us full-grown fellers 'cause she thinks that would make her look silly. But Jody is about the right size. An' I got a real old Injun-fighter that hankers for a nice kid to worship him. Roust him out. I'm in a hurry."

Mr. Blanton went through the door and came back with a sleepy kid and a black-and-white dog that sniffed Red with far reach of nose as if Red were a stranger, then looked up to see what Jody thought.

Jody said, "'Lo, Red," and leaned against Red to yawn sleepily. Then, in suspicious alarm, "You ain't come for Bozo?"

"Yeah. You and Bozo both. You're goin' out to be a cowboy."

"Me?"

"Um."

Jody let out a screech and began to jump up and down, and Bozo barked and jumped up and down too. When they quieted down, Red said, "Now you listen clost. Is Dave Gridger in town?"

"He is, Red."

"An' Bill Clayton?" Red demanded.

"He was in the Silver Dollar all afternoon."

"Do you know if Marshal Vickers is in town?"

"Him and the two fellers are at the hotel."

"A'right. Come on."

Outside, in the dark beside Red's horse, Jody got his instructions. "You go to Mr. Vickers. No matter where he is, you find him."

"I'll find 'im, Red!"

"I know it. That's why I'm hirin' you. When you find him, you get him off by hisself and you say, 'Red told me to tell you to be over to Dave Gridger's saloon by eight-thirty'."

"Yep." Jody was ready to bolt.

Red clapped a hand on the small shoulder. "Wait a minute. How little work you think you have to do for a dollar? Next you go to where the judge is. Most likely he is playin' poker at the back of the General Store. You get him outside and you say to him alone, 'Red says for you to be at Dave Gridger's saloon by eight-thirty. And to bring anybody you want along.' Understand?"

"You betchu!"

"Then you've got to find the sheriff. If he ain't already in the saloon, you find 'im. And you say to *him* that the judge wants to see him over at Dave Gridger's saloon at eight-thirty."

"I shore will!"

"All right. Here is your dollar. Now you skedaddle. And if you do a good job you can go to work for me at two-bits a day. And you'll earn 'er, too!"

Jody let go with a joyful squawk and bolted.

RED rode slowly out of town and came to where Barber sat on the ground, his hands tied behind him. Old Mr. Backman stood by, as tall and motionless as if on sentry duty.

Red got off the horse. "It's been

fixed." He rolled a cigarette carefully.

Barber said, "Give me one."

Red put it into Barber's mouth, gave him a light, and rolled himself another. Barber didn't say thanks, but after a time he did say, "I wanta ask something."

"Ask away."

"Why do you give me cigarettes?"

"'Cause I think you want a smoke."

"You know I'd cut your heart out if I got a chanct!"

"I don't give a damn. I figger a man has a right to water, air, food, and some tobacco as long as he is alive. That's all."

Barber shut up as if thinking it over and not quite understanding.

Soon Red said, "Well, dad, I reckon it is purt near time for us to mosey."

When they came to the road just outside of the town they rode three abreast, with Barber in the middle. Nobody was on the street, but as they turned to the hitching rack they could see through the Silver Dollar's open door that a good many people were there. Red grinned, betting to himself that spider-fat Dave Gridger was wondering why business was so good.

As he got out of the saddle a small shadow scooted from the darkness beside the wall and said: "I done it, Red! All like you told me!"

Mr. Backman and Barber stayed outside, and Red walked into the saloon, well inside the door before he stopped. Everybody was watching. Those who didn't know that he had sent word around asking some people to be there, knew that he was on edge, dangerously.

Red stood straight and had his chin in. His eyes glowed. The more cautious fellows in the crowd began to move well away from the bar and nearer to the round poker tables that were up front. Two lamps were burning behind rusty reflectors high behind the bar. The coal oil light was soft and yellowish, and threw shadows from men's bodies to the floor, made them dance on the far wall.

The red-faced judge held his black hat in one hand and a wadded red bandana in the other. It was a warm night. He had on a boiled shirt, without a collar, and his long black coat. Shirt and coat were a part of the legal tradition of his day. His plumb round face was puzzled and anxious, for he knew that there was an impetuous craziness about Red—usually commendable, but often perilously rash.

Marshal Vickers, a head taller, stood beside the judge up near the front of the bar. The marshal's coat was off, but he wore a vest. There was a black single-action .45 in a belt holster on his hip. His hat was pushed back and his weather-worn face was set sternly.

The sheriff was on the other side of the judge and did not look happy. He nibbled on a cigar much as a rabbit nibbles on a cabbage leaf. The judge had acted funny when the sheriff asked why he had sent Jody, and the sheriff thought that maybe the judge had something up his sleeve to discredit him.

So it was a puzzled, doubtful lot of men that Red faced. They all could see that Red was pretty worn and haggard, but his eyes had a fierce glow.

The Wells-Fargo men had come along with the marshal. They had handkerchiefs stuffed down inside their necks to keep the collars from wilting too fast and, with fresh cigars in their mouths and filled glasses of whisky, stood well down along the bar where they could overhear men talking among themselves and maybe learn something.

BILL CLAYTON had been drinking, but he could drink a lot and not be unsteady on his feet. For days he had been drinking and keeping unsocially to himself, even at the bar. "Sorrowin'," men said, respectfully. He looked the next thing to shabby, too, as if he had been sleeping in his clothes. His heavy, sullen

face flushed with an uneasy glower as he saw Red single him out and stare. Bill put down his glass of whisky and wiped his right hand on his trousers to get off the sweat. What Red had said about ivory handled revolvers troubled him vaguely.

Red scarcely looked at the judge or the marshal, or even at the Wells-Fargo men, because they were friends, or at least not unfriendly. And so were the old poker players that the judge had dragged to the saloon. He wasn't so sure about the sheriff, but felt that the sheriff didn't count for much. Red knew that Bill Clayton could be dangerous, believed that Dave Gridger, with his smooth meanness, was even more so.

Red said across the bar:

"Gridger, you come around on this side of the bar, where you can hear good, and—"

Gridger forced a kind of laugh, trying to pass off the sharpness in Red's voice. "Oh, I can hear all right."

"—and so I can see what you've got in your hands!"

That was a hard slap. Red had as much as said, "I don't put it past you to shoot when I'm not looking!" Gridger made a little noise in his throat before he got out some words. "I have to tend to my customers." He put his hands flat down on the bar to show how empty they were.

"They'll be no more drinkin' till I get done!" Red told him.

Gridger's temper came out in almost a bellow. "Who is runnin this place, anyhow?"

"I am!" Red told him. "You get around here like I said!"

There was a breathless silence. Gridger looked doubtful and angry. All of a sudden he began to suspect that it wasn't just happen-so that had brought so many people into the saloon.

Gridger said to the sheriff, "Are you goin' to stand there an' let this Clark feller bulldoze people?"

The sheriff nibbled faster on his cigar for a minute, then took it out and looked at it. The judge raised his pudgy body on tiptoes and whispered, "You keep out of this!"

The marshal dropped an elbow, half turned, looked at Gridger. "You had better come on around here like you've been asked. We all will be the judge then of whether or not there was good reason for askin' you."

Gridger picked up his bar towel, made a wad, threw it down as if trying to break something. He grumbled something or other as he poured himself a drink of whisky. He pitched it down his throat and came waddling around the bar.

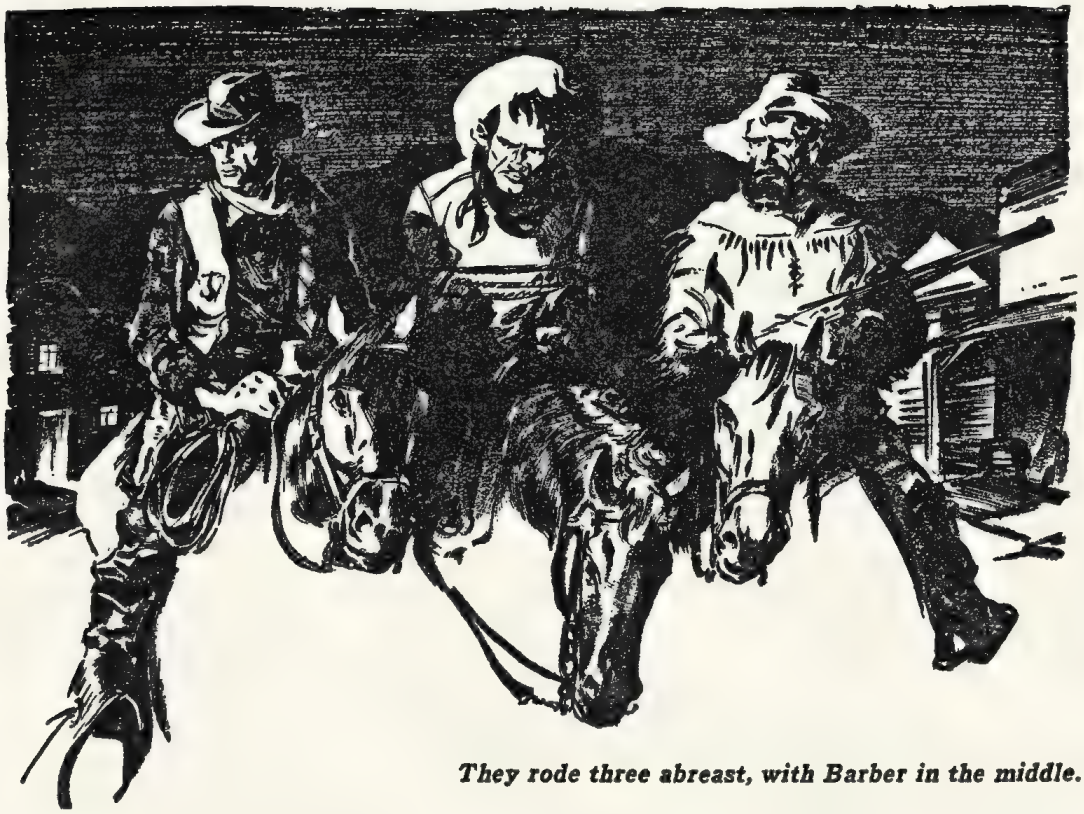
He went right up close in front of Red, put his hands on his hips, looked mean and said, "Well, what'd you want?"

Many of the people there had never seen the smooth-talking, now-have-a-drink-on-me Gridger mad before. But he was afraid, too—not merely of Red, but of how men like the marshal and judge were acting.

"You'll hear what I want in a minute," Red told him. Then he called, "Bill, you come up here, too."

Everybody turned to look at Bill. He glowered sullenly, not moving, not speaking. He was well lickered and there was the flush-urge to make this a quarrel right now; but he remembered what Red had said about sweaty hands slipping on ivory handles, and his hands were again sticky with sweat. He could tell, too, that Red was dangerously ready. Also he, like Gridger, was made uneasy by feeling that so many of these people had been waiting in the saloon for Red to come.

People watched nervously. The silence was like pressure. Bill had to give way or make a quarrel. As yet there wasn't anythink to quarrel about. Bill gave his thick lips a sneering twist and swaggered up alongside of Gridger.



They rode three abreast, with Barber in the middle.

"Well, what is it?" he grunted out.

"I got some news that I want everybody to hear. It ain't good news."

Men edged in. Red was not speaking loud but he was not mumbling any words.

"Day before yestidy, Miss Kate rode over to visit with my lady boss. She stayed till dark. Then the two kids as ride for the Lazy Z went along to see her home. They didn't come back. Yestidy I rode out to find out why. I found their bodies on the trail. Shot!"

THE judge gasped and let the black hat slip from his fingers. There was a stir of muttering as if a wind swept over men's lips and passed. Marshal Vickers moved in closer.

Gridger wet his thick lips.

"Maybe Knox done it for spite!" he suggested. Somehow he felt a lot better, because nobody could very well accuse him of any hand in that.

Bill had something of the same feeling.

"And Kate?" he asked.

"Stole!" said Red. "You was home last night and she wasn't. Didn't you wonder?"

Bill growled, "They told me she was over to your ranch. She don't like me meddling. She is in love with Jim Kilco and rides out to meet him!"

Marshal Vickers nudged Red and asked, "Who done it?"

"The same feller that shot Sam Clayton!"

"You mean Mell Barber?"

"I mean Mell Barber!" said Red, looking hard at Gridger. Gridger started to sweat. Red seemed to know things and be about to say them.

The marshal asked, "How are you sure?"

" 'Cause I caught him!"

Bill Clayton's sullenness broke in the quick question, "You killed him?"

Red watched, noting how eager Bill sounded.

"No. He ain't dead," he said. "And he talked!"

Red paused and people squirmed nearer. Then Red said, looking right at Bill, "He says *you* and Gridger put him up to shoot Sam Clayton. And me, I believe him!"

"Red!" That was the judge's incredulous protest. It sounded loud because nobody else said a word.

Dave Gridger took in a big gulp of air, just about as if he had been stabbed. Red had accused him of very nearly that same thing on the day Sam Clayton was shot, and Gridger had wiggled around it. But there was a scared look in his eyes.

Bill looked dazed. Then his face blazed with anger. He yelled, "That's a lie!" He stood tense and glaring, ready to make a grab for his gun.

But Gridger said, "Don't, Bill!" and took hold of his arm. "He is just waitin' to kill you!"

"That is right," said Red. "I am!"

Some men that were close edged off in a hurry. This was fight talk. Their moving shadows darted and jiggled on the far wall.

Marshal Vickers spoke up, sharply. "Careful, boy!"

Red kept his eyes on Bill, pointed straight at him. "He has been in with rustlers to steal his dad's own cows. He has also rode with outlaws. He fretted his dad into being took to the ranch, 'gainst the doctor's advisin', just so the joltin' would make him worse. And havin' killed his dad to get half the ranch, he wanted to get rid of Kate so he could get all of it! Well, he won't!"

Everybody, even Marshal Vickers, moved back. Gridger waddled backward to the bar.

Red and Bill stood out on the floor face to face and alone.

It seemed to take some moments for Bill to get it into his head that people were waiting for him to do something. There was a confused haziness in his eyes, not so much fear as a look of being shattered inside. It was somehow as if he had never before realized just how rotten low he was until Red spread it out in plain words.

Bill made a sound almost like a sob. He jerked at his ivory handled gun, His hands were sweaty and his fingers were nearly numb. He was so nervous that they simply wouldn't take hold. His fingers closed on the gun butt. Then Red's hand flashed back, shadow-swift. His body bent with a backward jerk and the cocked .45 had its muzzle up over the slick holster. But he did not shoot.

Bill Clayton's gun, half out of its holster, seemed to stick. His eyes wavered past Red into a startled stare. Red was on to pretty nearly every gun trick; and the one of looking past a man to throw him off-guard did not in the least bother him. He watched Bill Clayton's hand, and saw the hand slide laxly from the gun butt, as if the wrist were suddenly broken. Then Bill lifted his hand in a swipe across his eyes as if trying to wipe away something.

Mell Barber was coming in with Mr. Backman behind him. Mr. Backman stopped in the doorway, tall and straight, with flowing beard, long hair, buckskin shirt, and stood with the rifle in the crook of his arm.

Mr. Backman had decided that was a good time for Barber to come in.

HIS hands were tied behind him, and his face was bruised on one side, but he was not coming with his tail between his legs. He knew that he was a goner; so, being damned anyhow, he was willing to tell all.

Gridger's fat face all of a sudden looked flabby and his hog-shaped belly caved in. Bill's thick lips moved without a sound. He scraped his feet a little as if trying to back away, but his feet seemed too heavy to move. Barber went right up close to him, and from all

around men pushed in close again to see and hear.

The sheriff seemed to think that it was his place to get up alongside of Barber, as if the outlaw were his prisoner.

The marshal took Red by the arm, pulled him aside. "Are you *sure* Bill killed old Sam?"

"I believe for certain that him and Gridger—and don't you go forgettin' Gridger!—put Barber and them up to shootin' Sam. I *know* Bill made his father get wagon-jolted so he would die!"

The marshal turned around to listen.

Mell Barber was talking. His voice was mean and his eyes glittered. He started in on Gridger first. "You begun lendin' Bill money to blow on women and gamblin'. When he couldn't pay, you made him throw in with them rustlers you are in with!"

Gridger yelled denials, but there was something in his flustered loudness that was confessional.

"Then Bill began to ride a little with the bunch. And about three months ago he first begun to talk to me about how well off he'd be if the old man died. So then—"

Bill had the look of a man who has been beaten with a club. His voice was low and strained, as he tried to shout, "No! 'Tain't so!" But somehow there was no earnestness in his voice, only the weak desperation of a man who has no real hope.

"It was planned by Dave Gridger for us to ride in and kill Sam, then ride out and nobody would know us, and—"

Gridger was bellowing, "That's a lie!"

Barber squirmed a little and looked fierce. He yelled, "I know damn well you want to see me hung and I'll be hung, but you two sons are not goin' to—"

There was a flurry, and before anybody quite knew what was happening, Barber had jerked the marshal's gun out of its holster. The sheriff jumped back with hands half lifted and yelled, "Don't!" Barber fired twice, right up against Bill's belly.

Bill clapped both hands to his belly and bent over, falling. He fell sidewise and turned over. Barber swung the muzzle at Gridger, and Gridger just opened his mouth and yelled with both hands out in front of him as if to push bullets away. When the gun went off, Marshal Vickers had hold of the back of Barber's neck with one hand and was grabbing at the gun with the other. There were too many people all bunched up for anybody but a madman like Barber to risk shooting. He was so jostled and hurried that when the gun went off the bullet missed Gridger and hit a man beside him in the shoulder.

Men squawked and feet clattered. The marshal wrenched Barber's arm high up over his head. The judge, who didn't know what fear was, had jumped in to help the marshal, and in doing so he blocked Red, who had swung up a gun to bring it down on Barber's head. But Barber dropped the gun from his uplifted hand and quit struggling.

The Wells-Fargo men had jumped in like a couple of angry bulls even while Barber was shooting, but they had to more or less knock people who were trying to dodge off out of their way. Red changed his feelings a little toward the Wells-Fargo men—they certainly were not timid under gunfire.

They took hold of Barber and hustled him across the room, slammed him up against the wall, jerked him around, and one of them snapped handcuffs on Barber's slim wrists. They were smart too —smart enough to see that Barber had curiously small hands. One of them took a piece of stout twine from his pocket and tied Barber's thumbs together. They didn't stop there. They were like bulldogs with a rag doll, and took Barber at a jostling run to the back of the saloon, stood him up in a corner by the dim light, and started in to work on him.

Dave Gridger was shaking. He looked

down where the men were stooping over Bill, crowding in morbidly close. Gridger gave his head a furtive twist this way and that, then sidled to the bar, sidled along it. He untied his apron and started for the back way.

There was a clatter of peg heels, jangle of spurs, a call, "Come back here, you!"

Gridger knew that voice. He turned around and explained to Red, "I was just goin' out back. I feel a little sick at my stomick!"

Red said, "Get back up here and set down. Maybe we can find a rope that will cure that belly sickness."

The Wells-Fargo man that had the hoarse voice came up front and passed close to Red, who was beside the chair where Gridger sat. The Wells-Fargo man gave Red a queer look, grinned a little, then he went on over to where Marshal Vickers was stooping down over Bill Clayton.

He pulled at the marshal's arm. They walked off some steps. The marshal listened and tugged at an ear, smiled a bit, and glanced toward Red. He took off his hat, scratched his head, and the Wells-Fargo man laughed. The marshal nodded, and the Wells-Fargo man looked at Red again, then went in a hurry out of the front door.

Bill Clayton was flat on the floor, dying. His eyes had a hazy look, and he groaned a little, with speckles of foam on his mouth. Judge Trowbridge was down on his knees and bent his head low as he took Bill's hand and spoke solemnly.

"Bill, you are dying. Tell us the truth. Has it been as Mell Barber says?"

Bill squeezed the lids over his glazed eyes. His thick lips barely moved. The judge put his head closer, turning an ear. Bill whispered weakly. He tried to say something more, but words would not take sound. The judge put a hand gently on Bill's forehead and sighed. A little later he closed Bill's eyes, then got up, brushed at his dusty knees.

GRIDGER and Barber would have been lynched in ten minutes except for the judge, who had a committee formed to take care of the prisoners. Nobody would listen to the sheriff, who almost tearfully tried to explain that he didn't know a thing about how his brother-in-law had been carrying on.

A rasping voice told him, "Then that shows just how poor a sheriff you are!"

Marshal Vickers took hold of Red's arm and frowned. "Red, you are under arrest."

"Me? What have I done?"

"When I arrest a man I always take off his guns."

"You really mean—me?"

"You. But I don't want to embarrass you before people, so will you give me your word that you will do as I say?"

"I reckon I will. Only what you goin' to say?"

"You keep right by me from now on."

"Is it on account of Kilco?"

"Yes."

"Mell Barber he told, huh?"

"You certainly worked it slick hiding him behind the blankets!" The marshal almost but not quite smiled.

"Barber didn't know that."

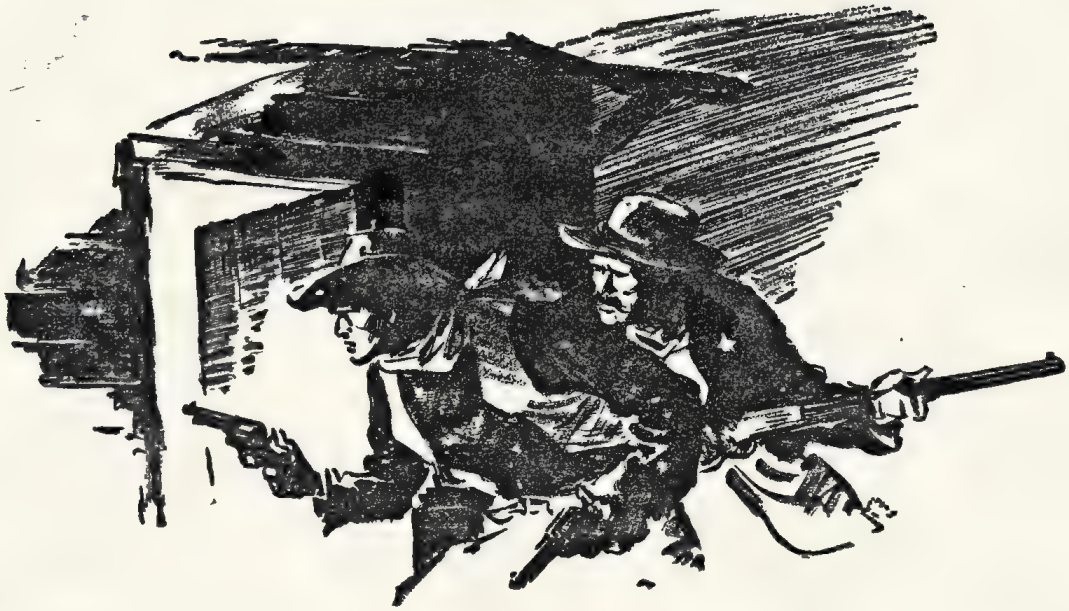
"He told where Kilco was. In what bunk. The Wells-Fargo men can add, quick!"

Red made a submissive gesture. "I lose. So all right. Only you tell me, has he got a wife and some children?"

"Yes."

Red scowled. "He has got a mean streak, I reckon. But he is all right, too, lots of ways. He has got grit. And I reckon if a purty girl likes a feller he don't much care how many wives he has got. Not if he is that kind of a feller."

The citizens' committee made up a posse to take the prisoners down to Poicoma. The judge talked them into deciding to do that—otherwise, as soon as word got around among the Clayton cowboys, they would come storming into



"Kilco is yourn, but them are my women!"

town and string up Gridger and Mell Barber.

THE Wells-Fargo man, who had grinned queerly at Red in passing, had left the saloon to go to the livery stable for horses so that they could all ride out at once to the Lazy Z ranch.

It was around midnight when they set out.

The marshal pushed on fast. The Well-Fargo men were now friendly toward Red—too friendly. He wished they would shut up. But their exasperation was over. Mell Barber was a prisoner, and they knew where to find Kilco. They laughed about how Red had fooled them in concealing Kilco.

"If you ever turn bad," said the hoarse one, "there will be plenty of hell!"

They paused at the Springs. Old Manning put his head out of the door and hailed them. Red called, "You've got comp'ny comin' to stay the night. Mr. Backman will give you the news. And they's plenty!"

It was dark when they came out of the timber above the Lazy Z ranch house. All of a sudden Red said, "Whoa-up!" as sharply as if he were in charge, and pulled up his horse short.

They could see that a light was burning in the house.

"No tricks now, Red!" said the hoarse man with some suspicion.

The marshal edged his horse shoulder to shoulder to Red's black, bent his head, peered at Red's face. "You've given your word, son!"

"I smell me something wrong!" Red told him and leaned low, staring through the dimness. The moon had slid down behind a pine-crested mountain ridge, and the darkness of before dawn lay like a blanket. "I can't see good, but I *think* I see a horse standin' there up close to the house. Do you?"

The marshal cupped both hands to the side of his head, leaned forward. "I don't, no."

"You fellers?" Red asked.

The Wells-Fargo men denied that they could see anything. The hoarse one said, "Well, let's go on. If there's anything wrong, we'll damn soon fix it!"

Red swung out of the saddle. "You all need specs! They is *two* horses there!

They're right up close to the house!"

"You wouldn't try to fool us, Red?" said a Wells-Fargo man, jeering a little.

"When I smell me something wrong, I go slow!"

"I've noticed just how timid you are," said the marshal dryly.

"I ain't goin' to argy. But I'm goin' up on foot, quiet. You all can come along—on foot!" Red tossed the reins aside.

"Lookout, marshal!" said the other. "That fellow is—"

"Now lissen!" Red cried, "they's horses there. I ain't put in my life readin' brands a half mile away without havin' eyes. Either friends or strangers come on them horses. If they are friends all right. If they are strangers, it's all wrong to be there this time of mornin' where two women are—"

"And an outlaw you are hiding!" said the hoarse man.

"Outlaw be damned! You've won the pot. Kilco is yourn, but them are *my* women."

The hoarseman pointed. "I'll be damned!" His companion said, "There *is* a horse!" Marshal Vickers came out of his saddle. "I apologize, Red. I thought I had as good eyes as any man."

A horse, with the slow movement of dragging its reins as it edged along, nosing for wisps of dried grass to nibble, had moved directly in front of the doorway. They could even see the outline of the saddle.

"But we can ride up," a Wells-Fargo man suggested.

"We are goin' to walk," Red told him.

"Walk," Red had said, but he started off at a trot, teetering and stumbling. The marshal kept alongside. The other men, heavier, puffed and nearly tripped at every few steps.

A long stone's throw away Red stopped short, listening. In the stillness he heard a sound like that of a woman trying to muffle sobs. Red stooped, unbuckled his spurs, kicked them off. The marshal said, "Wait," and took off his spurs. Together they went on a run for the house. The horses, not frightened but uncertain, walked aside, trailing their reins.

Red barely paused at the door, looked toward where he could hear the sobs, not even glancing toward the other end of the room. Then he jumped through the door, and the half drunken Knox, who was pawing Jane Alvord, wheeled about. His hat was off, and his straight black hair, slick as if freshly greased, gave him an Indian look.

Jane was sitting on a bench, her shoulders hunched down sidewise, the hem of her dress pressed to her face. Knox stood almost against her, instinctively drawing his gun as he jumped up. A fierce yell from the other end of the room carried a warning at Red, but he didn't look around, not even when a shot came from behind him. There was the mingled outcry of the cook's squawky warning and a woman's shriek, then the nearer roar of a .45 as the marshal from the doorway killed Joe Strumm over at the table near the stove.

Red had felt a flicker of hesitation about shooting because Knox was so close to Jane; but Knox's whiskey-lit eyes blazed as he fired; and he was answered by Red's .45, held hip high. Once, twice and again, Red shot with a rapidity that gave the sound of more than one gun's roar. Knox was dead on his feet when the first slug smashed through his heart. Jane, as if paralyzed, did not move. A bullet six inches to the right would have killed her. But Red *did* not pause. He killed Knox on his feet, shot him again before he started to fall, shot him as he was spilling forward with the sagging slump of a broken-legged dummy, shot him again as he flopped to the floor.

Then Red spun about, facing toward the other end of the room. The old cook, tied up like a pig for the market, was yelling a blasphemous chant of praise.

Kate Clayton was near the wall, tense and pale, her body drawn over. Joe Strumm had been making her sit by him at the table, but when Red appeared like a devil out of the darkness she had screamed and jumped up.

Marshal Vickers slowly put his gun into its holster as he walked across to the bunk where Kilco, gray and cold, lay with blood on his mouth.

The Wells-Fargo men pounced at the cook, lifted him up, set him on a stool, cut the rope that was wound from his ankles to his shoulders. The cook was in a state of almost furious delight. He screeched, "I kep' tellin' 'em he'd come!" He sounded like a dishonored prophet who had been vindicated.

AS NEARLY as the marshal and Wells-Fargo men could put two and two together, Strumm, on the night Red had caught Knox, had started back for his cabin to tell Mell Barber what had happened, and had found Knox tied to the tree. He cut Knox loose and they went off together, neither of them wanting anything more to do with Red, at least that night.

The cook had overheard enough to be sure that they had gone to Knox's ranch to talk things over and plan to move what cows Knox owned out of the country. They rode through the day, bunching the cows; and when evening came they started to drink, and with a little whiskey much courage returned.

It occurred to them that Red would have gone into town to face Gridger and Bill Clayton, which would mean that the crippled Kilco would be alone with the cook and the women. And if he hadn't gone to town, maybe they would have a good chance to even things by shooting from the dark.

They rode over, found a light burning, had a sneaking look and found two women, but that didn't matter. Red was gone, so they marched in. The cook was asleep and sat up helplessly. They told Kilco to throw up his hands. They had their guns leveled, but Kilco reached under his pillow for his own revolver that he had persuaded the cook to give him. Kilco hadn't the slightest chance.

Strumm and Knox felt pleased with themselves. Being a little drunk, Strumm had made Kate sit by him and listen to him talk of all the big things he had done. Knox got the maudlin idea that he wanted to join his little ranch with the Lazy Z, all easily done by having Jane marry him. Then Red had walked in.

Knox lay flat, face down, legs curved up and arms out. Marshal Vickers stood above him, looked up at Red. "That wasn't like you."

"It sure was!" Red said defiantly. "I owed him three or four killin's from time past, and I made sure he got 'em. That's all."

THREE months later, Kate Clayton and Red, on whom she had forced the mouth-filling title of "General Superintendent", rode over from the Clayton ranch to attend the wedding of Miss Jane Alvord and Dr. Price Mills.

The doctor had given up his practice at Poicoma to come to the measly little town of Nelplaid. Then he had nearly worn out the livery stable horses to visit the Lazy Z, which was still under the management of Red Clark—assisted by Jody Blanton, Bozo, Mr. Blackman and the cook.

Jane had a new big house on the hill where Jody and Bozo and an Indian woman lived; and it was there that the wedding was held, with Bozo suspiciously sniffing the preacher's legs and Jody sniffling with his face tucked up against Mr. Blackman's buckskin shirt. Jody meant to marry Jane Alvord himself when he grew up.

A few weeks later, in the office of Judge Trowbridge, the agent of an Eng-

lish syndicate laid down a certified check for $137,000 before Kate Clayton and an English cattle company became the owner of the Clayton ranch.

Kate pressed her pretty lips together and found it hard to breathe.

The agent said, "That is a very large sum, Miss Clayton," as if he wanted to cheer her up.

Red quit turning the brim of his hat through his fingers and stared at the smooth-cheeked agent who wore tight fitting pants. Kate reached out and took Red's hand.

"I ought to be glad," she said. "But I'm not."

The agent thought Kate was one of the prettiest girls he had ever seen, and he looked as if he wanted to say that she would be welcome to stay on and on as long as she wanted; but he merely cleared his throat and took a sidelong look at Red. He had heard a lot about this Red Clark, but he couldn't see anything in this lanky, almost shabby cowboy that seemed to confirm what he had heard. So the agent couldn't understand why Kate held to Red's hand as if she liked holding to it.

The judge looked at his watch and said that it was pretty near to the time. He took up his black soft hat and opened the door. They filed out, with Kate keeping hold of Red's arm. They went along the rickety board sidewalk and across over to the hotel, where Kate's trunk and bags lay waiting for the stage.

Kate looked at him earnestly. "Red, won't you use some of this money to buy yourself a little ranch?"

"I been sayin' no for a week. I don't want no little ranch. Nor a big un."

"Just why not?"

"Mostly, I reckon, 'cause if you get mad you can't tell the boss to go to hell an' quit. I like ramblin'. Me, I'm goin' off somers I ain't known and go to work where I can tease the cook, sing night herdin', and crawl into my bedroll without givin' a damn what some fellers off in Kansas City or Chicago say is the price of beef!"

"If ever you do want money for anything, anything at all, you will let me know?"

"Sure. You bet. Only as long as I got two legs and a horse has got four, I can earn wages."

The six-horse stage swung up with lumbering roll in a cloud of dust. The judge took one of Kate's arms, the agent took the other, and they escorted her to the open door of the stage. She put her foot on the step, took it down, pulled away from them and turned to Red. Kate put her two gloved hands gently against his cheeks and kissed Red on the mouth. And she was not smiling.

The stage rolled away with dust boiling up under its wheels like a smoky curtain that rose from the ground. Red saw a gloved hand twinkle at him from the window, and he flourished his hat in a last good-by.

PORT OF THE WINDS

By DON WATERS

CAPTAIN Jeremiah Mason sat hunched up on a pilehead, his chin cupped in his hands, gazing through thoughtful eyes over the oil-scummed water. Lying alongside the docks opposite, or moored further off the piers, were dozens of vessels, empty, forgotten.

An air of melancholy hovered over those dead and dying windjammers. Grounded on the mud banks, tied with sun-bleached mooring hawsers to the pilings or swinging with the sluggish tides on rusted anchor chains, they were slowly rotting away, waiting for the breaker's hammer. There were many derelicts in Rotten Row that had hauled their last cargoes.

Captain Mason's blue eyes misted as the thought struck him. He too, was in the mud. Idly he reached into his pocket, pulled out a plug of tobacco, whittled a little handful of shavings from it, rolled them between his palms, stuffed his pipe full.

He cast a speculative eye up at the sun. No need to look at his watch; it was near noon. Unless he got back to Sailors' Snug Harbor inside the next ten minutes, he'd get no dinner today. Rules! They ran the place with rules. At seven and twelve and six, they called to meals. The superintendent was a martinet. Unless you were at your place then, you lost the number of your mess.

A dull and futile anger welled up in

Captain Jerry. He, who had been his own master and the master of many other men for decades, was taking orders now. Stiffly he got down off his perch and started to walk around the road that followed the edge of the water.

"To hell with him!" he muttered. "To hell with that sharp-nosed, weasel-faced fathom of bilge water! For spite, I'll not go back at noon today!"

A sudden ear-piercing whistle shriek caused him to look down towards the open end of the bight. A Diesel tug was swinging in from out the bay, the exhaust from its crude oil engine beating hollowly on the air. From the towing bits aft, a steel cable stretched, lengthened. The bowsprit of a ship came around the point of land, then the stem. Before she was in the clear to her foremast, he saw that it was the *Belle of Bangor*.

Another minute and she was in full view, heading toward him. In a quick glance, he appraised her, from the corroded gilt balls on her trucks down to the weed and barnacle encrusted copper of her waterline. The paint on her green hull was flaked off in leprous patches. Her bulwarks were a dirty gray. Her teak monkey rail was bleached and weather-worn. Her yards were bare, hanging at crazy angles in the slings. She had been long neglected and uncared for. Yet there was a certain jauntiness in the way her bowsprit perked upward, in the run of her tuck aft, the sweet and gentle sweep of her sheer line. She had been a flying beauty once, a fast and easily driven vessel that seldom laid long waiting for a cargo.

WHEN Captain Mason got around to the dock, the *Belle of Bangor* was tied up. He stopped under her long bowsprit, looked up, caught his breath sharply as he gazed on her battered figure-head. A neat job, that, a woman with golden tresses and flowing robes. Time had dimmed the blue eyes, the red painted cheeks, the yellow hair. Yet that piece of clean grained white pine still held its shape. Faded and dirty, it was yet a rare and beautiful thing in Jerry's eyes.

He clambered on to a pile of packing cases where he could look down over her bulwarks to the long length of her decks. They were streaked with black ridges where the tar had spewed out of her seams. She must have loaded cement on her last trip, for in the little pockets around her rail stanchions gray fillets of stone showed. Haphazard coils of rotten and frayed rope lay piled up at the break of the poop. Each passing puff of wind swirled clouds of ashes from an overflowing barrel that stood beside the cookhouse. There was a litter of old tin cans and newspapers under the forecastle head.

Captain Jerry climbed down from his vantage point. Grasping the rusty chain plates, he clambered up on the rail. From out the doorway of the dilapidated deckhouse, the watchman emerged.

"Git off!" he yelled angrily. "Git off! No trespassing on this ship!"

Captain Jerry called back, "Pipe down, mister! I just wanted to come aboard. You see—" he hesitated before continuing—"I commanded this ship once."

The expression on the old man's face, caused the burly watchman to stop, gaze steadily up at Jerry standing on the midship rail. He cast a quick glance up the dock.

"No, Cap'n," he said. "I've got my orders. There's a party due down here to look at her. When they go, mebbe I'll let you look around. If you'll wait a while—" He turned, jerked his thumb towards the road. "That may be them now."

Jerry jumped to the dock, watched a car draw up to the pierhead and stop. Three men got out and approached, laughing and talking together. Each had

an unlighted cigar stuck out of the side of his mouth. With calculating eyes, they looked the ship over. Mounting the rail clumsily, they climbed down on the deck.

"Well," one commented, "she ain't much, but there is some salvage in her." He kicked at the pumps. "Good brass liners. There's a couple cents a pound there."

One of the others nodded, pointed ahead to where her big anchors and chains lay.

"There's always a chance to git rid of 'em," he announced.

A man with flapping jowls fingered the heavy gold watch chain looped across his expanse of vest. His little eyes roved in quick darting glances from the yards aloft down through the open hatch into the littered cargo hold below. He grunted scornfully as though this were but a waste of time, pulled a paper from his pocket, held it in a pudgy hand, read rapidly, "I offer at public auction, the ship *Belle of Bangor,* of the following description, tonnage fifteen hundred, length two hundred feet, breadth forty feet, depth of hold, thirty feet."

His words trailed off into an unintelligible mutter. Captain Mason did not hear them. In his mind's eye he saw the Belle of Bangor with all sail set, her mizzen royal spar, a thin match stick as seen from the deck almost a hundred and fifty feet below. Again he heard the tramp of feet at the call of "All hands on deck!" Again he saw the score of foremast hands, hauling on sheet and halliard. In his ears rang a chantey, as the topsail went up—

Oh, Bony was no Frenchman,
Way—hey—ah!

He brushed the back of his thin, blue-veined hand across his eyes. The chantey faded. From the deck before him, he heard, "Ten percent down, the balance in twenty-four hours. How much am I bid?"

"Five hundred dollars," one of the men mumbled without removing his cigar.

"Seven hundred an' fifty," his companion replied with a laugh. "We gotta have two bids, you know."

"Sure," the auctioneer chuckled. "We gotta have two bids or more. I'm bid seven-fifty. What do I hear?"

He cupped his hand over his ear in a gesture of attention. All three laughed loudly.

A FIERCE, hot surge of anger swept over Captain Jeremiah. So this was the way they did it—auctioned her off like a wornout coat or a patched pair of pants! In the hot crucible of his wrath, a daring plan was formed and welded into a fixed purpose. By frugality and hard work, he'd saved a bit of money—not much, but enough to keep him for the balance of his days. A few thousand dollars, a shield against charity, a buffer against abject want. By eking it out, he could keep himself clothed decently, buy his bit of tobacco, pay the rent for his own room and bed. Without it, he'd have to sleep in the dormitory. He'd lose his pride; he'd—

"I don't hear nothin'," the auctioneer laughed. "Down goes McGinty to the bottom of the sea. Going, going—"

"A thousand dollars!" Captain Jeremiah Mason roared out.

The three men jumped, startled.

"A thousand dollars!" a gasp of unbelief went up.

There was grim determination in Captain Jerry's answer.

"That's what I bid," he snapped.

"It's a trick! You ain't biddin' that yourself. Someone else—" The sentence was unfinished.

"Listen, you shovel-nosed junk snooper! You give me any of your lip and I'll mop up this deck with you! A thousand dollars, and I'm only starting. If you want her, she'll come high!"

"Why, I've bought a dozen of these

old tubs for the junk in 'em." The auctioneer swept his arm in a gesture that embraced all of Rotten Row. "You gotta know the business, or you never make even a penny. Now, if this hooker was steel, it might pay. A thousand! It costs that much to break 'em up when they're wood. You're crazy!"

"Who's crazy?" Captain Jerry shook his fist violently under the other's nose. "Mister, one more crack like that out of you and you'll be fit for the hospital." He waved the menacing left fist up and down. "Here," he growled, "smell this! Here's slow music around a tombstone. Now get off my ship while you're all in one piece! Get, you scum!"

Watching him over their shoulders, they clambered hastily over the rail.

Once down to the fancied security of the dock, the auctioneer shouted back, "I'll call your bluff! You got twenty-four hours to pay."

He reached in his pocket, drew out a card, flipped it over the rail.

"There's the owner's address. Now, how about the ten percent? If you don't put it up now, and the rest of the money by this time tomorrow, the deal is off."

Jerry jerked his check book from his pocket. Slamming it on the caprail, he wrote a check for a hundred dollars, wadded it into a ball, pitched it down disdainfully to the wharf, turned his back on them.

He sat down on the main hatch coaming, a triumphant grin on his face. Flipping the card between his fingers, plans and ideas raced through his mind. Suddenly he jumped up from his seat, his whole manner changed. He was no longer an aimless dock loiterer, an inmate of Sailors' Snug Harbor. Jerry Mason had a command again.

THE ship soon showed that a master again trod her decks. Before the passing of many weeks, she was a different looking vessel. In contrast to the silent craft around her, she was the source of a ringing medley of sounds. From her welled up the merry clink of calking mallets, the thud of mauls, the metallic ring of chipping hammers.

Unless business ashore took him away, Captain Mason paced back and forth across the poop from sun-up till dusk, his hands behind him, his expression one of mingled pride and concern. Sailors' Snug Harbor was almost deserted now. Those occupants of the home who were able to work were busy holystoning decks, painting and chipping rust. Slung in bosun chairs aloft, men were scraping spars. All were working without pay, a share for each and a share for the ship, when and if the *Belle* got a cargo and put to sea.

When and if—That thought lay heavy on her owner. His little store of money was almost gone. He'd been careful and frugal. There were dozens of long splices in weather-worn halliards and sheets that should have been new line. There were hundreds of rust-eaten fittings that should be replaced. The moldy canvas that had been stored in the sail lockers had been taken out, scrubbed and dried. There was plenty of work to do on those sails. They'd need many a patch, many a fathom of new bolt rope.

Down in the cabin, in his ledger, he'd kept his accounts. Each evening he figured the amount that he once had. The end was near now unless he got a charter for the vessel.

He'd been around to the agents' offices, listed her. Never a word had he heard from them. He knew cargoes were scarce. There were dozens of steamers in port that would load and haul for a coolie's wage. Perhaps he'd better call a halt. It would take his last cent to fit out the ship.

He looked down at the quartette of old men sitting on overturned soap boxes, blissfully calking the deck seams,

keeping time to their mallet strokes with a song. A couple of others in the shade of the bulwarks frayed out old rope for oakum. Up forward, a little group were chipping rusted anchor chain, passing it back link by link to another stooped and gray-haired man who was carefully daubing it with red lead.

Perched along the rail was a line of grizzled men, too decrepit to work. From one of them, Jerry heard the statement: "In '88, I was first mate on the *Belle*. She was a new ship then. She made the run from the Equator to Fifty South in—lemme see, was it seventeen days? I disremember."

Jerry turned quickly at a call from the dock. Two well-dressed men were standing looking over the rail.

"Are you captain?" one asked.

Jerry nodded.

"May we come aboard?"

He nodded again.

They introduced themselves. They were from Los Angeles.

"We've been looking around for a ship. This is the only one we've found that looks at all possible."

Jerry's eyes brightened.

"A ship, eh?" he ejaculated. "Well, mister, if you'd looked the whole Pacific coast over, you wouldn't have found a smarter craft than the *Belle of Bangor!* Come below." He led the way.

An hour later, Jerry appeared on deck again. His eyes were lighted with pleasure. Genially he bid his visitors a good day, watched them walk up the wharf.

Then he became aware of the silence that pervaded the ship. The calking mallets were still, the chipping hammers quiet. His crew were standing like so many penguins, their heads all turned in one direction, gazing back towards the stern of the vessel, watching the big limousine moving away from the dock. Captain Mason did not forget the dignity of his position. He beckoned towards the one he had delegated as first mate.

"Mr. Shaw," he said in a tone of great severity.

Mr. Shaw jumped as though someone had stuck him with a sail needle.

"Mr. Shaw, I'm expecting you to keep your people at work."

Instinctively the mate threw back his head, roared, "All hands!" Then with a sheepish grin on his face he said, "Aye, aye, sir."

From the main deck came a sudden yelp of pain when one of the old men brought his upraised calking mallet square down on his thumb. Captain Jerry turned, hardly able to repress a grin. He gave no hint of what had transpired. He could feel a score of eyes boring into his back as went down below. All that afternoon, an interrogation mark hung heavy over the *Belle of Bangor*. Till the darkening cabin warned that sundown was at hand, Captain Jerry sat below, figuring.

That night, seated at the table in a breathless silence, he reached across into his desk, pulled out an envelope, extracted a folded paper. His three mates opposite him sat with mouths agape when he wiggled it up and down reverently.

"I have here," he said, "a charter with a moving picture company. This ship is due in San Pedro in thirty days. I expect you to see that she's in shape by that time." He held up a check. "I have an advance which is ample to outfit her."

He paused and gloated over the effect of his words. The look of awed astonishment written on those faces opposite was like a drink of rare wine to him. They wanted to ask him a hundred questions, but they held their curiosity in check.

Then Jerry's manner suddenly changed. In spite of his efforts, tears sprung into his eyes. There was a lump in his throat. Mr. Shaw grabbed his hand in both of his, yelled, "Hurray, hurray!"

Before another five minutes had passed, the entire crew of the *Belle of Bangor* had invaded the sacred privacy of the after cabin. In quavering, high pitched voices, they sang an old sea chantey:

Oh, we're rollin' down to Rio
Roll an' go!
Roll an' go!
Oh, we're rollin' down to Rio,
R-o-o-ll and go!

ROLL and go, with her masthead cutting little circles against the blue California sky, with a white bone in her teeth, sailing before a stiff northeaster, the *Belle of Bangor* swirled out beyond the Golden Gate, heading south. The dun colored hills soon faded into the mists off to eastward. Roll and go—a tanker homeward bound from China, her crew lining the rail, the whistle blaring a greeting, passed a half mile off, viewing a sight which few on board that steamer had ever seen before, a full rigged ship under all sail, driving hard before a fair wind.

Roll and go, with her canvas ballooned out, stiff squares of board hard duck, with everything flying, stay and stunsails, a jib o' jib up forward and a ringtail aft, the *Belle* romped to the southward, logging her fifteen knots. The water curled six feet up on her stem, pushed out in a swelling bow wave on either side. Night fell over a purple sea. The wind freshened after sundown and the *Belle of Bangor* went snoring over the dark water, a phosphorescent track, turbulent and tumbling, spreading out fanwise over the sea astern.

Midnight came. To the call of "All hands on deck!" the second mate ordered the crew to reef her down to her topsails. Yet under shortened canvas, the old ship sailed fast. Her red running light flashed a ruby flare over the rolling waters to port, her green matched the dark seas to starboard. The blackness of the night was filled with the sound of slushing water as her bows shouldered the seas aside. Aft, a momentary little red glow brightened, died down in regular sequence, moved back and forth across the poop. Captain Jerry, hands behind him, walked with measured pace from side to side, smoking a cigar. There was calm and peaceful contentment on his face. His soul was filled with a vast satisfaction.

With the coming of dawn, they got all the canvas back on the *Belle;* before a moderate breeze, she held her course down the coast. In the afternoon she rounded Point Fermin, swung below the Pacific battleship fleet. One by one her sails bunted up to the yards as she headed into the wind. Part of the crew swarmed up the ratlines. The anchor rattled down with a growling rumble. A crowd on the breakwater watched the little figures of men out on the footropes fisting the canvas, snugging the sail into a neat harbor furl.

Just at sundown, the crew came aft, one by one, demanded an advance. Captain Mason stormed and cursed, yet he could scarce repress his feelings of complacency. His crew lowered the longboat and went ashore that night. This was as it should be. It was well after midnight when they came back, singing hilariously. Some of them had not been drunk for years. They were drunk tonight. That, too, was as it should be.

At daybreak, chanteying, they walked the anchor up, the chain clanking round and round the capstan, keeping time to their song:

Oh, whiskey is the life of man,
Whiskey for my Johnny!
Whiskey killed my brother Jack,
Whiskey for my Johnny!

A TUG towed the *Belle* into a wharf, where a curious crowd watched. A square-rigged ship, her three sky scrap towering high aloft above the sheds and warehouses, she was unique and odd

lying to a dock where for years only snub-nosed steamers had berthed. At mid morning, a string of automobiles lined up on the dock alongside. Director and cameramen, principals and extras, half a hundred people clattered over the decks. Electricians ran looping cables up to the yards, set flood and spotlights in strategic positions. All was confusion and noise aboard. Down in the cabin, there were loud and acrimonious story conferences.

For the first week, Captain Jerry was all agog over this new adventure. The spirit of the sea, a saga of tall ships and spreading canvas was to be caught on the film and preserved. *The Belle* was to represent that epic time when the white wings of American clipper ships were supreme on all the seas of the world. She would live and move in the flickering lights and shadows long after the last high-sparred ship was forever gone from the oceans.

As the days passed however, doubts began to creep into his mind, doubts that grew into a sickening disappointment. He tried to catch the thread of the story, but soon lost interest in that. The whole thing seemed helter-skelter, a senseless confusion. Events were being pictured on the *Belle* that had never occured in his long experience on any ship at sea. Absurd situations were filmed one after another.

Jerry liked the director less as the days passed. Blasé and cocksure, the director never asked the old captain for advice. When Jerry occasionally offered a suggestion, it was met with a condescending, "Yes, yes, my man," as one would speak to a servant.

One evening, after a particularly trying day, the director ordered Jerry to get rid of his crew.

"This picture is dragging, he explained. "I'm going to get a bunch of young fellows aboard who can step lively and keep out of the way of the cameras."

"Why, why!" Jerry sputtered, unable to find words to express himself. He caught his breath. "I need them to work the ship when I take her out. Surely you're going to put her under sail, give her a chance to show what she looks like with all her canvas drawing?"

The director shook his head. "That isn't necessary. We can fake that. We can tow her out with a tug and get everything we want without actually sailing her. I'm going to get another crew that'll suit me."

"What right—?" Jerry began.

An annoyed frown crossed the director's face. He tapped the rail with well manicured fingers. "Read your contract, read your contract, old man. It's all down there."

Jerry's fist clenched. A hot torrent of words trembled on his tongue. Then suddenly his belligerent attitude changed. He went below, got out the contract and studied it. Not that he needed to. He knew what he'd find there. He had been trying to delude himself that those phrases which gave the charterers the right to hire whatever crew they wanted, and discharge whom they pleased, to treat the vessel as they wished to, would never really be put into effect. He had no choice. In his eagerness to charter her, he had signed away his rights.

Next morning, he paid off his crew and his mates. He treated them more than fairly when he divided what money he had with them and kept no share for himself nor for the ship. They asked no questions; they knew how things had been going. Jerry smiled, thinking of the tales they would tell once back at the Home.

He had little time to reflect on their going, however. He had to oversee the rigging of a wire cable to the mainmast head. The mechanics had set up a donkey engine in a shed on the wharf. On top of the building big tanks were piv-

oted so that tons of water could be suddenly dumped from them. A couple of aeroplane propellers were mounted on forecastle head and cabin top. That night in the glare of lights, with the roar of engines and the whine of wind, they took a storm scene. The ship was hove down, abruptly released. Back and forth she surged, canting steeply one way, then the other. The tanks on the shed were up-ended. Tons of water slid down the roof, deluged the decks. Screeching propellers swished it in horizontal sheets of spray across the *Belle*. The hero stood feet a-spraddle at the wheel, rolling it frantically up and down while streams of water from a firehose struck the sail above and splashed down around him.

Jerry, watching, was half tempted to go up and tell them that the captain rarely steered the ship. That was a foremast hand's job. The "old man" might stand by in an emergency, but even that was generally the mate's duty. At any rate, if it were as rough as they were trying to picture, there would be two men at the kicking wheel. He thought of the many hands that had grasped those wheel spokes in the years since this vessel had first slipped down the ways. Hard and horny hands, those, with calloused, work- roughened palms, many with split and bleeding knuckles, tar-stained and rope-scored fists.

"Aye," he muttered, "But the fists of men."

That was no play acting, steering the *Belle* when she was driving hard across the Roaring Forties. A grim and bitter business, standing at the wheel in winter when the keen wind cut like a knife and oil skins and sea boots became ice encrusted, heavy with frozen salt spray, glistening suits of armor.

HE LIT a lantern, went through the main hatchway down the ladder into the hold. The racking they were giving her was none too good for the old ship. She was making water. They'd opened up her seams. Next day a monotonous and melancholy sound arose as the crew, grumbling, manned the pumps. The electricians and helpers were busy taking down the cables that ran snakelike across the decks, or looped through the ratlines and hung over the spars. Truck after truck was loaded with big flood and Klieg lights, coils of armored wire and all the paraphernalia that had been used in the picture. It was rapidly drawing to a close.

Someone called Jerry. The director wanted him. Down in the cabin, four men sat around the table, each with a sheaf of papers before him. Jerry took a seat, glared at the man in charge, who addressed him soothingly.

"Now, Captain, we've been talking this thing over. The picture is almost done and the best part of it comes last. We've decided on a new, smashing climax. We've just finished writing it in. We're going to wind up the story with a bang! It's a bear, a wow! We're going to tow the old ship out to sea tomorrow, way out, three or four miles from land and blow it up."

Jerry leaped from his chair. "You're going to do no such a thing with my ship!" he shouted, "Why—"

The director answered testily, "Now, now, Captain, compose yourself. This old hooker doesn't amount to anything. You'll be paid well for it. That's the way the story reads now, and that's the way I'm going to have it. It's my ace in the hole."

Jerry stood glaring at him. "You're not going to destroy the *Belle of Bangor*, not if I can help it."

"Why not?" the director asked. "It's no good for anything. What's the use in making a fuss over a small matter? You've gotten three times its value already, and you stand to get more. Besides, this is just a waste of talk. If you read your contract, you'll see we have

the right to do anything we want with it." He smiled indulgently, "If you get tough, remember we're only liable for the amount the vessel would bring in the open market."

Jerry started to speak, stopped. It was futile to try to explain how he felt to this man. He wouldn't understand that the *Belle* deserved a more dignified fate than to be sacrificed to cap a cheap melodrama. By a long and useful life, by weathering many a hard blow at sea, she'd earned a better death than to be led to the block and slaughtered while the mob yelled gleefully at her death throes. Perhaps there was some way out. He'd saved her once. Given a little time, he might be able to think of a method to save her again.

He walked over to the barometer hanging on the wall, tapped it with an unsteady knuckle. "Well, you'll not pull your stunt tomorrow, Mister. The glass has been going down for the last two days. She'll be blowing a whole gale tonight. You'll be glad you're ashore when morning comes. Besides, she's leaking. She should be put up on the dry dock and recalked."

"That's all right. If the weather isn't suitable tomorrow, I'll wait until it is. We can rig a steam pump on her and bail her out in a hurry. All right, boys, that business is settled. Get all your stuff and let's pull out for the studio and see yesterday's rushes."

FOR some time after they had left, Jerry sat in the empty cabin, thinking. They had him foul. The realization became a certainty; he could neither buy them off, nor dissuade them from their purpose.

What could he do? Slowly he walked out on deck aft to the big oak wheel with its polished brass rim. He leaned heavily against it. It stood a foot taller than himself.

He was an old man. He felt it more than ever tonight. He'd given his life to the service of the sea. In the natural course of things, he did not have much time left. These last months of work and worry had been none too good for him.

The sails had been shook out on the *Belle* that afternoon and had not yet been furled. His eyes ranged from the royals high aloft, little white rectangles, seeming no larger than pocket handkerchiefs against the sky, down sail on sail to the courses, a half an acre of canvas hung on ancient yards. Those spars had stood many a sudden, wind-racked strain in the past. He knew in his heart they couldn't stand much now.

The fading afterglow of the sunset over Catalina, orange and gold, was slowly merging into a black cloud bank. There was no wind, but a heavy mugginess in the air told a story to him. He did not need the barometer to warn him what would soon occur.

He heard a voice call, "Come seven! Baby needs some new shoes!"

The newly hired crew were bunched up on the forecastle head, shooting dice. With a determined step, he walked up to them. At his approach, one hastily pocketed the dice. A dozen or so young men, ill at ease, looked down on the captain. There had been no proper discipline since they'd come aboard. They didn't even have a mate to give them orders. Yet he'd seen to it that they'd kept a bit of respect for him.

"Boys," he announced, "you can have the night off." He glanced aloft. "Just let the canvas be. It'll save you the trouble of making sail in the morning."

There was a general shout of approval to this, with but one dissenting voice. "But, Cap'n, aye bane tank it blow tonight. I bane feel it." There was one sailor at least in that crowd of dock loafers.

Jerry assured the speaker, "That's all right. I'll be responsible. You run along into the city and have a good time."

He watched them leave, yelling like a bunch of boys just out of school.

The day faded. In back of him, the lights of the city came on, bright spots that ran regular dotted lines along the streets and up, up to the hills behind. From that direction, a faint breeze rippled the dark water in the slip alongside. Above, the canvas rustled gently. The easterly wind, a slow moving current of air, stirred, grew stronger. The hawsers that held the ship to the dock began to creak and complain as they surged on the pilings.

Captain Jerry walked aft along the decks, muttering to himself, "So that was his ace, to blow her up. Well, we'll see."

Glancing down into the hold, he saw the oily glint of bilge water, heard it gurgle and suck at each small roll of the *Belle*. He shrugged his shoulders, muttered, "It doesn't matter now."

He took down a fire ax from its clip. A few seconds later, muffled pops sounded one after another, as straining hawsers parted.

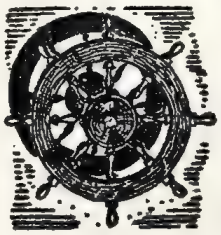
The urge of the light breeze that filled her topsails slowly moved the ship away from the dock. It was close work to steer the *Belle* through the opening between the wharves. Her bow cleared a moored steamer by a foot. As she swung, her stern barely missed the dolphins at the end of the pier.

With only inches to spare, Jerry nursed her down the narrow channel between the shipping. He squared off for the open bay that led straight out into the wide Pacific. Off to starboard, the blinkers at the mastheads of the battleship fleet were winking little bright eyes in the blackness of the night. As he came up on them, he noticed a gang of men under the glare of flood lights, hooking on the falls, preparing to hoist a ship's boat clear of the water. They too knew it was going to blow tonight.

The lighted, floating steel fortresses came abeam, dropped astern. Once clear of the land, the wind increased in force. Royals and topgallants, topsails and courses had all filled now. With each passing minute the *Belle* quickened her pace. Phosphorescent, the swirling wake ravelled out like a living thing. The thump as the waves struck her dead astern was a regular deck-jarring boom that echoed above the noise of wind and wave. From below came the sullen swish of bilge water slushing back and forth.

Once, through a break in the fast moving clouds, the full moon lit up the ocean. Captain Jeremiah Mason stood silhouetted for a brief second, bareheaded, legs braced stiffly, both hands grasping the spokes of the big wheel. There was an expression of peace and serenity on his face. Unheard above the shriek of wind and thump of water, he whispered to himself the old saying, "The men of the sea know how to die when Davy trumps their ace."

Darkness closed in like a velvet shroud, a darkness filled with the moan of the wind twanging through the fiddle tight wire stays and the crash of waves charging out of the roaring gloom. The *Belle of Bangor,* with her head held high, surged along to the westward, rising and falling as the mounting seas ran under her tuck, balanced amidship and then slid away from the bow, a ghostly shadow in the darkness, a shadow from the past sailing into the shadows of the everlasting future.



THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

WE'VE all read and enjoyed many of the Foreign Legion stories of Georges Surdez, and in this issue he appears in a kind of technical collaboration i.e., Comrade Surdez does the writing, and contributes much of the idea. He explains the circumstances to the Camp-Fire circle.

A few months ago I ran across a court-martial sketch tucked away on an inside page of a French newspaper. It was *The Nine of Spades*, by Pierre Chaine. It was a very fine piece of work, very human, evidently based on an actual occurrence—some details are too vividly true for them to be otherwise. I translated it as it was, but when I had it done I realized that it would lack its genuine impact for any reader not wholly familiar with the French Army, Morocco, professional soldiers.

As it was meant for French readers, and French readers of a particular sort, it had been condensed to a brief sketch of the court-martial. The author took it for granted that his references to French Army stuff would be understood. I thought then it might be a good idea to retrace the episode from its beginning, step by step, to show how naturally soldiers get into trouble, with the best intentions in the world. Once the military machine starts grinding, there is little opportunity for the poor chaps except to follow their destiny. Anyone who has been wet, tired, nervous, understands the need for that one drink of brandy, and at the beginning, that was all they wanted.

The seven bewildered culprits admitted the truth of the charges against them, merely explaining that they had found some liquor in a captured village. The casual reader might think that they were just drunken chaps—would not know just what liquor can mean to tired, wet soldiers. And I had heard much of the quarrels over kegs, barrels, crates of liquids, from Legionnaires. I also guessed, as would anyone who knows Legionnaires, that they would not have got drunk in hostile territory unless something had pushed them to drink too much.

The seven accused men could not explain why, when they had been sobered up, they had resisted arrest. I knew why: Corps spirit. Legionnaires know that their officers do not like to be humiliated. And nothing would "burn up" a Legion captain more than to have some of his men brought in, disarmed, by a patrol from any other unit. Believe it or not, I have seen a brace of Legionnaires in the custody of a couple of cops being exhorted by one of their own officers to make a break: "Aren't you ashamed, you, Legionnaires, to be led around by cops?" And they made the break and got away. The cops didn't like it, either. For those who know the Legion from the inside, an initial will be sufficient as identification and absolute proof: That officer was Captain F. . . . !

Even the choice of the nine of spades as the death card had the ring of reality, for that card always stands for Death in fortune telling, as the nine of hearts stands for Love, the nine of clubs for money, the nine of diamonds for news. And fortune telling is such a popular indoor sport with European ladies that no man can think of Death and see a deck of cards without thinking in a flash: Nine of Spades.

As you see, I understood and liked the story, but I was baffled for a while, was sure that others would miss some of the angles unless fully explained. I laid it aside, but it kept floating into mind whenever I tried to think of a good idea. I was haunted by it:

The Nine of Spades, The Nine of Spades! Then it occurred to me that I could write the full story—and I did. If I did justice to a splendid idea, it must be a good tale. I arranged with Pierre Chaine to have the story appear as a collaboration.

Georges Surdez.

DON WATERS sat in his cabin and wrote a note and rowed it ashore—a note to go with his story "Port of the Winds."

It's been some years since I nudged my way through the circle around the Camp-Fire and said my say. During that absence, I built a fifty foot, shoal draft, centerboard ketch, with my wife and daughter for a crew cruised her down through the West Indies, and did some of the things that I have wanted to do for so long.

Now I have another boat in mind, a fifty foot schooner, built on the lines of the Lunenburg fishermen, drawing six feet of water with plenty of room in her hold for stores and supplies to outfit for a long voyage. Perhaps if the Gods of Chance so will it, some day soon, we will launch our new craft, head through the Canal, slant off to the southwest, catch the trades and roll and go, drive across the South Pacific to the goal of all wistful small boat sailors, the South Seas.

In the meantime, we are moored far up a jungle clad river in southern Florida. I am putting some patches on the bottom of the old canoe. I've tuned up the outboard. We've traced a line on the charts, a line that leads up the canal, then across Lake Okeechobee, up the Kissimmee River through some beautiful scenery to the string of little lakes that dot the map of central Florida where the lilies block further progress. From there, we'll portage across to the headwaters of the St. Johns and go down that river to the east coast.

I only wish the canoe were large enough, or better still that we were outfitting a fleet of many small boats so that the whole Camp-Fire crew who love adventure and the outdoors could make the trip with us. With this wish, I bow and back out of the circle of firelight to let some abler man take my place.

(I knew Don Waters when he was building his bug-eye on the Chesapeake, sailed and fished with him, saw him point his bow south and his stern north on a day six or seven years ago. He is a self-reliant adventurer who loaded his pipe and did some thinking, and arrived at a philosophy and a way of life. He thought of the things that chain a man to a place and a routine. Then he loaded his pipe again, and asked—why? Since then he has done a first-rate job of thumbing his nose at the habits and cares that turn hairs gray on the mainland. He has told about it in a book that just came to my desk—*Gypsy Waters Cruises South.* I recommend the book heartily, with a warning to the comrades—some of those who read it will kick themselves as they go to work the next morning in order to pay the landlord and the installments.)

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, who edited our magazine from 1910 until 1927, is preparing a book of his experiences. The story in this issue is one of the chapters, and we hope for others.

H. BEDFORD JONES, who has been bringing brave and half-forgotten moments of American history to life in recent short stories, gives us these comments on "Gone to Glory."

This is of course a fictional reconstruction. The *Wasp* vanished.

However, there are various accounts which give hints, and I've combined them here. The alleged report from British sources, in the Navy Department files, of a craft having been fired into by an unknown ship in the night. Blakeley, we know, was a fighting captain. And we know that she was spoken on October 9, 1814, by the Swedish bark *Adonis*, as here reported. That was the last definite word of her.

The two officers from the *Essex?* Farragut's diary notes that they were sent to England or Rio to give their evidence. Another chronicle states that they were shipped from Rio aboard a Swedish vessel. Still another account, without stating how it was known, says they were transferred from the *Adonis* to the *Wasp*, as here given. A neatly ironical touch.

TO EXPAND the *Ask Adventure* service in the way of fishing information, C. Blackburn Miller will answer queries on salt water fishing. Fresh water fishing will continue to be handled as in the past by John B. Thompson (Ozark Ripley) who is well known on the fast streams and the lakes as "Kit" Miller is where the surf pounds.

Mr. Miller is as reluctant to talk about his own achievements as he is ready to talk about fishing in general. It's up to me to say that he is very active in conservation studies of salt water species, is the author of "Cruise of the Ballyhoo," a book of Florida fishing, and president of the Salt Water Anglers of America. He says:

A simple suggestion, containing a world of promise. It implies liberty, the joy of living and the acceptance of a heritage that is ours by natural endowment. As a boy I listened to the same suggestions. It meant then a dark pool by the walls of an old mill. Years have passed since those boyhood days but always have I lent attentive ear to the mental suggestion. My first large fish was a tarpon, taken off Corpus Christi in the Gulf of Mexico, when I was but ten years old, and I then and there acquired a vast respect for the Silver King. I have fished for him in all the waters that he inhabits, using everything from a flyrod to a trolling rig.

The trail led on through the indigo waters of the Gulf Stream and I learned about marlin from it as well as the vagaries of sailfish and that ocean torpedo, the wahoo. Bimini with its palm grown shores and the deep mysterious waters that surround it. Here the giant tuna makes his home before travelling far north and a few preliminary rounds with this fish will make you realize what strength and endurance can be wrapped up in a seven foot hide of glittering silver.

Realization dawned upon the angling world a few years ago that action must be taken in order to preserve some of our fast dwindling species. The idea that the ocean's vast supply was limitless had proved a fallacy. The result of a more or less comprehensive investigation of these alarming conditions was the formation of an organization known as the Salt Water Anglers of America.

This association, nationwide in its membership, had as its chief objective the study and conservation of salt water fish. Realizing that only through scientific knowledge of the spawning grounds, feeding areas and migratory routes could conservation be placed on a fair and sound basis, they sought through Federal Government aid sufficient appropriations to permit the Federal Bureau of Fisheries to carry on necessary research.

Fishing, after all, is not merely catching fish. Any tyro can do that—at times. It is rather an appreciation of wind-swept skies, the smell of the sea and the glint of sun on a gull's wing. It is love for the swing of the seas, and the tilt of a boat's deck, the song of the reel and the thrill at the sight of a dark fin cleaving the waves.

MANY of our comrades have read in their papers of the deaths of Robert Frothingham and Howland Wood. Others will learn of it now, and there are thousands of you, all told, who have written to these men and received their advice during their long years of association with this magazine.

As may often happen in this city, we had never met Mr. Wood, who worked here, except by telephone, but he answered regularly and thoroughly several dozens of letters each month, and he was one of the busiest and most appreciated of the *Ask Adventure* staff. Mr. Frothingham, who lived in San Francisco, we knew quite well. Our last recollection of him is a hale man past seventy and looking far less, filling the air with hearty talk of mountains and bear and moose, and the plans of the next trip he hoped to make.

Robert Frothingham, *Ask Adventure* expert on Old Songs That Men Have Sung, died of heart disease at the age of seventy-two, in San Francisco.

Mr. Frothingham was born in Galesville, Wisconsin in 1865. He began his career as a telegraph operator, became a reporter for the Brooklyn Eagle and New York Sun, and went into the advertising field. For twenty years he was connected with *Life* and *Everybody's Magazine*. At the time of his retirement in 1925 he was a specialist in poster advertising.

A year ago, when we had the pleasure of Mr. Frothingham's company for dinner

and later attended his splendid illustrated lecture on mountain trails at the Explorers' Club, he explained the reason for his retirement. He gave up a large income in advertising "for to admire and for to see." At earlier periods he had taken long leaves of absence to hunt big game in Alaska and do extensive camping and trailing in other regions. A lover of nature, he wanted to give full time to observing, writing and lecturing about it in order to interest others, which he did with great success.

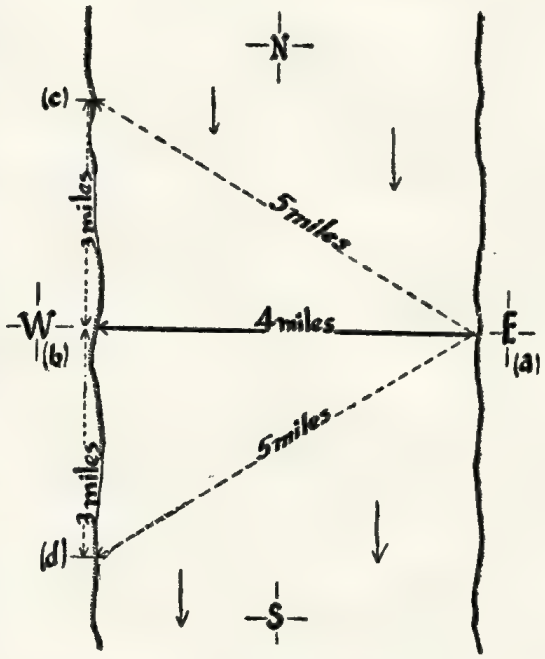
He wrote three books and compiled six anthologies which included extensive research in old songs and poems. He wrote many articles on wild life and was an authority on the kadiak bear of Alaska.

He was a member of the American Game Protective and Propogation Association, and the American Museum of Natural History, and belonged to the following clubs: Circumnavigators, Explorers', Philippine, Adventurers', and the Arctic Brotherhood of Nome, Alaska.

Howland Wood, *Ask Adventure* expert on Coins and Medals, died of pneumonia at the age of sixty.

Mr. Wood was born in New Bedford, Mass., and was graduated from Brown University in 1900. He began immediately the work on numismatics which became his life career. He was especially known as an authority on Mohammedan and Oriental coinage. In 1920 he received the Archer M. Huntington medal for numismatic writing. During the World War, he arranged an exhibit of military insignia which was subsequently acquired by the Smithsonian Institute. Since 1913 he was the curator of the Museum of the American Numismatic Society of New York City. Over varying periods, he was Secretary, Governor, and Chairman of the American Numismatic Association, and at the time of his death was editor of the American Journal of Numismatics.

IN OUR last issue there was talk of deviation due to ice floes drifting eastward or westward that made Peary and other Arctic explorers march, say, thirteen miles in order to make ten miles of northing. The matter of deviation is simple but also a little baffling, and required us on the staff to get out pencil and paper and do some arguing. So we had this cut made. It is supposed to show a river four miles wide flowing southward at a rate that will carry a swimmer who leaves *a*, and swims in a westward direction, down to *d*.



The swimmer goes five miles but he has only had to swim four, and the current has given him a free mile.

If he actually wants to make good on his westing and climb out on the opposite shore at *b*, the swimmer has to head for *c* and keep swimming in a direction parallel to the line *ac*, and has to swim five miles to make four, because the current robs him of a mile of work.

In our discussion of Peary, there was a good deal of care taken to preserve accuracy in this highly complex and contested subject. One error has already come to light; it was fortunately a quite minor one, but if any of the comrades see others over their sights we hope they'll speak up at Camp-Fire about them. The mails arrive in time for the next issue.

H. B.

Ask Adventure

Information you can't get elsewhere

ASK ADVENTURE covers the Far North.

Request:—I have been considering going north to the Arctic to spend about a year or eighteen months to obtain moving pictures and material for lectures.

I would be glad to have your opinion on the best transportation to Ungava, Baffinland and that section of the north country. Can you give me an idea of the cost of such a trip and where one might stay, as a base? I had in mind a Hudson's Bay Post but if you know of something better, I would like to hear of it. Also, what would living expenses run?

Thank you very much for any assistance you may be able to give in this matter.

—T. F. Upham, Malartic, Que.

Reply by Mr. Victor Shaw:—The region in which you're interested cannot be reached by surface travel during the winter months, and the cost of such a venture will doubtless prove surprising to you. On my own trips to that region (made long ago to be sure, but conditions still obtain), my trips had to be made on some privately owned ships, since no Hudson's Bay ships will carry passengers. It is possible to get passage on a whaling ship taking supplies to stations, if you can locate them. Otherwise, you'd have to charter your own ship.

Sealing ships, such as go north every year from ports on the Newfoundland coast, charge $100 or so, as they'd have to go out of their course to land you. Whereas if you lease one suited to ice travel, it would cost you $20,000 or over just for charter party, with crew, food, fuel, etc., extra.

In any case, the route from Ungava is dangerous in summer because of heavy tides and floating ice floes. It stopped MacMillan and nearly lost him his ship, when he attempted to land on the west coast of Baffinland, north of Fox Channel. My own expedition landed on the east coast, since an intensive study of available reports by former ice pilots precluded any use of Fox Channel. The sea floor there is shoal and swept by strong daily tides from Fury and Hecla Strait, beside the always present swirling pans and floes.

You can reach the interior via Black Lead Island, where there is a Scotch whaling station (unless now abandoned). Black Lead Island is in the inshore side of Cumberland Gulf on the east coast. Thence you have an overland trip of no great distance inland to Lake Nettliling and also the large lake, Amagdjuak, adjoining it to the southward. These lie about halfway between the east and west shores of Baffinland.

Or, you can also approach this west coast by sailing around the north end of Baffinland via Lancaster Sound and Prince Regent Inlet into Gulf of Boothia. Or by going down into Admiralty Inlet, or via Pond's Inlet (south of Bylot Island into Eclipse Sound.) But there is always the danger of drift ice in floes and growlers and small pans to menace passage, to say nothing of shore-ice in a late summer, or a jam of floes caused by heavy winds from the north. For these reasons, one should always have along an experienced and wholly reliable ice pilot, and they still can be engaged along the Newfoundland coast.

Outside the rather new posts of the Canadian Mounted Police, there are no places where whites are stationed except possible whaling posts. There was an American station at Signuia Point, north side of Frobisher Bay, a station owned by New York parties, but I heard it was abandoned. The whaling station

at Black Lead Island was owned by Crawford Noble, of Aberdeen, Scotland, and may still be operated by his heirs. I have no late map marking the positions of the Police posts, but there was one near Chesterfield Inlet, Melville Peninsula, and one also at head of Repulse Bay, south of Chesterfield Inlet, called I think Fort Hope. One was established also I believe in Cumberland Gulf, and one also in the southern part of Ellesmere Land at about Smith Bay, just north of the east entrance to Jones Sound.

You can obtain this data from the headquarters of the Canadian Mounted Police at Ottawa, Ont. There are no regulation Hudson's Bay fur posts anywhere north of Hudson's Bay to my knowledge, nor have there ever been any. And the outposts of C. M. P. have only been established in comparatively recent years. There were none at all at the time I was there in 1897 and 1899.

Concerning living expenses in any of the region mentioned, you are obliged to take in everything of this sort with you. There are caribou in Baffinland, from Frobisher Bay along the coast both east and west, but very few get out to the northeast and north coast because of the Ice Cap and glacier belt from Cumberland Peninsula up to Bylot Island. They all migrate inland during the summer, anyway, though stragglers can always be found along the shores. There are no musk oxen in the south of Baffinland.

There are plenty of polar bear all over. I killed one well back from the south shore of Frobisher Bay on the south side north of Grinnell Land. Plenty of caribou at the head of Frobisher Bay, and also all along the coast up to Cumberland Gulf. They calve in summer near the coast.

An expedition to this region would include plenty of hunting of the Arctic type, but the ducks are most all eiders up there. There are salmon trout of large size in streams flowing into Frobisher Bay and Cumberland Gulf. Walrus come south at times as far as Frobisher Bay, but not in any quantity. You'd find plenty in Lancaster and Jones Sounds, though, also in Boothia Gulf and all large inlets entering Lancaster Sound. White whales are plentiful, also narwhal. There are quite a few white wolves on Baffinland, also Arctic hare, blue fox and many ptarmigan, with many of the great white Arctic owls. Sea fowl in myriads, of course.

As I said at the outset, if you can manage to wangle passage on a Police ship serving these Arctic posts, you'd have a dandy trip.

All this Baffinland region is still a bleak, wild wilderness in a country inhabited only by roving Eskimos and locked tight in winter. You can't even steam up through Belle Isle Strait until July 15th, without running much danger from driving floes and small bergs.

AND the Far South.

Request:—Is mining done to any extent in the South Sea Islands, and if so, what ore is mined?

I have always thought of the Islands as raising, mostly, coconuts and pineapples. Perhaps I am wrong. My husband claims that there are extensive mining operations but I have a hunch it's because he wants to go look-see. He is a miner.

If gold mining is done to any extent, will you please give any information you can? I should like to know the names of the companies, the wages they pay, living conditions for white families, and so forth.

N. E. L., Denver, Colo.

Reply by Mr. William McCreadie:—Your husband is right. Fiji of late years has developed rich mines and is today exporting gold and silver. There are four big mining companies working, three on this island of Viti Levu and one on Vanua Levu the next biggest island. The three here are the Emperor, Loloma and Koerere. Loloma just came into working in October and the Governor has stated that the first clean up was 1229 ounces gold and 552 ounces silver from 1280 tons of ore. It is forecast that the royalties in 1938 will be over £30,000. Few whites are employed in the mines except as overseers at from £6 per week up. The labor is chiefly native Fijians. Besides that we grow plenty of your favorite coconuts and pineapples and export thousands tons of sugar yearly from five large mills. Living is fairly reasonable and board generally runs around £7 to £8 per month. At Tavua, where the three big mines are, there is a new town grown up. Climate is about the healthiest in the world and whites live here to over 90. One chap at 96 went round recently canvassing *on foot* for voters at a municipal election.

IT'S in the bag! Fishing with a throw net—

Request:—Can you tell me how a throw net is used? Can one be bought and where? If not, can you tell me how to make one? We live on Rock River and I think a throw net could be used here.

—Ray Erbst, Rock Island, Ill.

Reply by Mr. John B. "Ozark Ripley" Thompson:—The throw net is constructed on the same principle as an umbrella. Each section made the same except there are no ribs in it, and a rope or stout line is used for handle. Where the end of the ribs would be, when an umbrella is opened, lead sinkers are attached. When you throw out the net the net opens like an umbrella and sinks, but when you draw it up the open end closes on account of the sinkers and catches what fishes are in it.

With a little practice you can throw the net and recover it closed.

A PASTORAL existence in New Mexico.

Request:—I wonder if you could advise me on local conditions in New Mexico. I have in mind a small ranch on which I plan to raise Angora goats. I have been advised by the Department of Agriculture that such a plan is feasible.

About how much money would be required to start a ranch to bring in a sufficient return for two people? Is grazing all done on privately owned land or is there free range? How long would it take before a return could be expected from the clip and how is the mohair sold?

R. E. M.—Washington, D. C.

Reply by Mr. H. F. Robinson:—To tell you the absolute truth I am quite ignorant on the subject from personal contact, but I have looked into it a bit and will try and give you a little information.

The raising of Angora goats is quite profitable in New Mexico, especially since the price of wool and mohair have gone up somewhat. I understand that mohair brings something like 25¢ a pound as an average, if properly clean and sorted. I am advised that the goats should ordinarily be sheared twice a year as it grows about one inch a month, and each animal should shear 3½ to 4½ pounds each shearing. Young ewes and kids, of course, will not shear as much, but the hair being finer will bring a little higher price if kept separate. I might say that some years ago I was told of one exceptionally fine buck whose hair grew to extreme lengths, and the owner would braid it and tie it up so it would not get broken nor filled with burrs. They let it grow this way for about two years and it reached a length of over twenty inches and sold for a fabulous price to theatrical wig makers—something like $200 for the one clip. Your increase should be at least 80% per annum as ewes usually give birth to twins, and often the increase will be over 100%.

I am informed that you may get ewes for around $4 a head—that is, you could some time ago. You would need a few extra fine bucks to bring up the grade, and breed for the length of fleece. Such bucks would cost you anywhere to $75 a head.

You have to provide some sort of shelter for the goats. They are not very tough, it seems. They cannot stand rains or snows. Even a heavy summer rain will bring on sickness and death if they are exposed too long. The goats do not do well on grass alone. They must have roughage, and live on weeds and even brush.

I have a suggestion to make. Albuquerque is situated in the midst of what is known as the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. There is in this district over 500 miles of canals (irrigation canals) and drains. Because of the water, they grow up densely to weeds and brush, grass etc., all of which would make most excellent forage for goats. It might be that you could get hold of a piece of ranch land in the center of this district and make arrangements with them to run your flocks along the drains and canals. You might have to divide your flocks into small units with a man or boy in charge so they could be under control and not get over into cultivated fields. It might be that this would work out and you could get the range for nothing—and again, on the other hand, the district officials might think that the goats might damage the canal banks more than the good they would do in getting rid of the weeds. However, this might be something that you could investigate if you are in earnest in coming out here and going into the business.

I do not know whether you have the Department of Agriculture "Farmer's Bulletin No. 1203, 'The Angora Goat.'" This will give you a lot of good information.

With a great many invalids in the valley there is a demand for goat milk. There are two goat dairies in Albuquerque, and there might be enough demand for another somewhere else in the valley. Write to Chambers of Commerce for real estate prices.

THE more you breathe the faster you go—in water.

Request:—I am a high school student and hope to qualify for the school swimming team. My school has a twenty yard pool.

The best time I have made so far for forty yards, swimming the crawl, is 23⅘ seconds. Although this is not good enough for the team, I'm sure that if I learn to breathe properly I will make better time.

When I lift my face out of the water I upset the coordination between my kick and stroke. In order to overcome this, I trained myself to swim one length of the pool without breathing, take a breath while executing the turn and when half-way back I take another breath. However I'm sure that this bad breathing is the reason for my poor time because it tires me quickly. I have a good racing start and do the turn smoothly. I will deeply appreciate any advice you can give me.

—John Danovich, Chicago, Ill.

Reply by Mr. L. De B. Handley:—Some years ago several prominent coaches undertook experiments to ascertain whether it was more profitable for a racing swimmer to breathe intermittently, or at every stroke, and results disclosed that even in fifty yard sprints most swimmers attain greater speed when breathing at every stroke. The longer the distance to cover, of course, the greater the need of adequate oxygenation of the lungs.

In using the crawl, breathing should be effected by inhaling during the recovery of the top arm, and exhaling during the recovery of the under arm.

It is best to inhale by mouth, then exhale through the nose, underwater, but some experience difficulty in fully clearing the lungs of vitiated air through the nostrils, and for them it is advisable to use the nose to start with, then complete the exhalation by mouth. It is important to use the nose to begin with, as that prevents the water from working up into the facial cavities, possibly causing infection and consequent sinus trouble.

To breathe successfully in swimming the crawl, it is necessary to carry the head in the wanted position and correctly time the action of the stroke.

The head should be held as in standing erect, and twisted laterally only for the respiratory acts, never raised and lowered, nor bent toward either shoulder. Further, it should remain straight, face submerged, throughout the recovery of the under arm; turned to the side throughout the recovery of the top arm. To mechanically keep it at the required slant, the glance should be directed at right angles to the body while inhaling, and the eyebrows kept approximately at water level while exhaling.

Bear in mind, too, that if the head is twisted for inhaling purposes before the under arm has started its drive, the under shoulder will sink and make it difficult to raise the mouth above surface. Be sure, therefore, to apply downward pressure on the water with the under arm, before turning to inhale.

Lastly, inhale deeply, fully, but do not attempt to exhale with force. Merely relax the lungs and allow the vitiated air to pour out.

A TRAPPER must out-cunning his fox.

Request:—I am writing you about fox trapping. I'd like to know the best land set in snow and on dry ground. Not blind sets but bait and scent sets. There is a man here who traps foxes who claims he can call a fox three thousand feet with his scent. He got eighty last year. I'd like to know how to make the most powerful scent, also how to make bait which can be kept sealed in glass jars.

—Clyde Reed, Hornell, N. Y.

Reply by Mr. Robert Spears:—Most trappers, like most hunters, begin work by trying to catch pelts instead of learning all about the animals, first, and then using their knowledge to catch furs. This applies especially to foxes. When you can find foxes in the spring, summer and autumn—their holes, their runways, their feeding and playing country, comes winter, and you'll know where to find and shoot them with a 22-highspeed or trap them with steel, snare, blind set or bait set. When you know where a fox is going to eat next week, whether fish, berries, honey, muskrats—then you can put down a trap and get him.

Trappers who catch them know foxes twelve months in a year, not just during fur-prime.

Medicine baits for foxes are anise, fishoil, honey-comb, musk, and various meats. Very sly, cunning animals, they recognize trapsets and efforts to fool them. Yet they have a lot of curiosity. A trap set on a knob, or knoll three or four feet high in the bare ground time, left till snow comes (wrap trap in soft, waterproof cloth) and then throw a crow quill, with a buckshot in the quill so it will stick up in the snow. This, near a fox runway. The fox climbs onto the knob and, if the trap isn't frozen up, gets into it. A fox will circle around a piece of looking glass swinging on a string—he will climb a perch

to look at it—rods distant. A trap there (if the trapper's tracks don't show) will get him.

A fox can smell bait a long way, but foxes have runways, and a bait on one side of this will draw well enough—toasted cheese, a beef head, scent drops. Set traps in varying distances from the bait, in runways where the fox jumps over a bush, stick, etc. Foxes are sometimes caught where they jump over brush by linen gill nets in which they tangle themselves.

THE aftermath of war: collecting your medals.

Request:—The writer has a friend who was a flier in the late war. He trained in France. From there went to Italy. Flew with the Italians. Then was sent up with the British behind Amiens. Flew with them over the lines during the Battles of Amiens and Beaupeum, then worked with the British up and down the lines. He was decorated with the British Distinguished Flying Cross.

He, although an American Officer on detached service, has never applied for a Victory Medal and I would like to know what bars he will be entitled to on a Victory Medal if and when he gets one.

—H. L. Pinkley, Dallas, Texas.

Reply by Captain Glen R. Townsend:—The clasps for the Victory Medal to which your friend would be entitled would depend upon the exact dates where and when his service was rendered. From the statement given in your letters he would apparently be entitled to at least two clasps—one for service in Italy and one for service in France. He might, in addition, be entitled to one or more of fourteen other clasps which may be awarded with the Victory Medal in appropriate cases. Thirteen of these are for participation in thirteen major offensives from Cambrai to the Meuse-Argonne in France and for the Vittorio-Veneto campaign in Italy. The fourteenth is the defensive sector clasp, only one of which will be awarded notwithstanding that service may have been rendered in more than one sector.

Upon making application for a Victory Medal the applicant's records are checked in the War Department and clasps to which the applicant is entitled are furnished with the medal.

AN ARCHEOLOGIST looks on Atlantis.

Request:—One of my hobbies is research, pertaining to the origin of the Polynesian races, and my work has brought me to Mexico, and Yucatan with its ancient cities.

Referring to Chichen Itza especially, scientists seem to disagree about the age of the ruins of that ancient city, and the majority apparently believe that they are not older than fifteen hundred years; some even claim that they are not more than five hundred years old. However, I am inclined to agree with the definite minority who claim that the ancient city was built over twelve thousand years ago—that is, before the destruction of Atlantis. The present ruins, however, might not be the original ones. The reason for my belief is that the present ruins seem to represent two different schools of architecture; furthermore some of the decoration and wall-writings are supposedly definitely Mayan, while the others differ considerably.

Furthermore, I came across a description mentioning that the foundation of the ancient streets or roads leading out of Chichen Itza bears fragments of sea-shells, thus proving without a doubt that at some time, and perhaps during the destruction of Atlantis, Yucatan was flooded, perhaps by a great tidal-wave.

I wonder if you could help me in trying to obtain some information on this matter, or perhaps you would be kind enough to let me know your opinion.

Furthermore, perhaps it is known to you that Dr. R. Glidden at St. Catalina island has a museum dealing with the Indians who originally inhabited this island. During one of his searches Dr. Glidden found a little statuette, which in my opinion represents a figure of definitely Buddhistic origin, contrary to some beliefs that it is Chinese. This little statuette is of great interest to me, and I am quite puzzled about its travels till it finally reached its ultimate resting place. Dr. Glidden told me that he himself is at a loss about its origin, and since it does not definitely deal with the original inhabitants of Catalina, he does not seem to be overly interested. However I am inclined to believe that it has a definite bearing as to the history of the Indians, since it might betray their thus far unknown origin.

Do you have any knowledge of this statuette?

—Herbert Lieker, Universal City, Calif.

Reply by Mr. Arthur Woodward:—If, as you say, you are one of the group that believes in the fabled Atlantis, I am afraid I cannot give you much encouragement from

any point of view. *If* we had any concrete evidence that was coherent and not pieced together with theory, instead of being a will o' the wisp sort of legend which has intrigued the seekers after romance for many years, I might attempt a discussion of the matter.

However, my training has been in the archeological and ethnological fields with factual evidence at hand. In archeological studies we usually find that while our evidence is sometimes fragmentary and puzzling, usually the pieces click together. Our one trouble is that we are too prone to interpret such evidence from our modern point of view, applying our Caucasian reasoning instead of trying to step into the moccasins or sandals of the old aborigine and thinking as he might have thought.

Atlantis and all of its glories has been constructed out of the whole cloth. So with the Pacific counter part of Atlantis, the Land of Mu. I think that the writers of pseudo-scientific books are overlooking a good bet when they don't bury the center of our "lost civilizations" in the Bering Sea. It is the narrowest spot between North America and Asia, and according to paleontological evidence it once had a warm climate. Think of the last stand of the redwoods and the non-floating powers of redwood cones, and how they must represent the tag end of some great forests which once extended from the Siberian mainland to this continent. One could go on pointing out all sorts of such evidence and then it would be easy to manufacture a culture center and sink it into the Bering Straits, where volcanic activity still pushes islands up and sinks 'em again. What more strategic place to locate a lost race?

But, Chichen Itza and the other ruins of Yucatan, Guatemala, Honduras and Central American regions, as well as the southern part of Mexico proper, where incidentally a vast amount of work awaits the students of the next few hundred years, in fact, all of Mexico and many parts of both North and South America, will need millions of dollars more of intensive work done before we can begin to see the light of our connected fragments of evidence—and when they are assembled, I don't believe the myth of Atlantis will be able to withstand the blow.

Differences in architecture and the material from which buildings are constructed do not necessarily imply any sudden change in the racial affiliations of the people who built them. The time element may be vital, and the changing styles of structures according to the individuals in different generations of the same people may enter into the picture. For example, simply because our own ancestors one hundred and fifty years ago all knew how to use a flintlock, does it necessarily follow that we, their immediate descendants, know how to do it? Nor could your grandfather understand the modern machine gun.

That is a simple sort of comparison, but if you were to think of our aboriginal population more in the terms of human beings, living under a different cultural system than our own, subjected to different environmental influences and bombarded by exterior stimuli from infancy to old age which differ radically from our own methods of thought, then perhaps you will realize more clearly the possibilities of misinterpretation on our part of material objects or concrete manifestations of thought which we are only able to translate in terms of what we see through our own eyes. One object does not make a culture nor a phase of culture—as far as the material culture is concerned. Arrowheads—for example, are the pants buttons of an aboriginal society. They were common, easily made and easily expended. Our pants buttons are necessary bits of cultural material in our own day. Yet we could not judge a people by the buttons. A porcelain button found by itself does not tell us the color of the cloth, the cut of the garment nor the type of person who wore that garment. It may have been bought in Japan, worn around the world and lost in Chicago, and originally it may have been made in Mississippi. Arrowheads may be traced by the material, we may know whether the man who made them was right or left handed and whether he used percussion or pressure methods of making them. Likewise by a rather roundabout method of deduction we might know something of the size of the arrow he used, the weight of the bow, penetration of the arrow and the fact that he was advanced enough to use a bow. However we would not know the physical appearance of the man, how he dressed, save by inference that he used animal skins, how he lived or what he thought.

The same thing applies to any other isolated bit of evidence. It may open up avenues of speculation and cause an archeologist to formulate certain theories which he may or may not be able to prove.

Thus your statement that you came across a description of ancient streets or roads leading out of Chichen Itza bearing fragments of sea shells, 'thus proving without a doubt that at some time, and perhaps during the destruction of Atlantis, Yucatan was flooded, etc.' To me the presence of sea shells in such a

place would not bring any such picture to mind. I could think of a dozen good sound reasons how sea shells might be found in such places without once referring to Atlantis.

As far as differences in the glyphs are concerned and differences in structures, why not? The Aztec or Mahuan peoples and the tribesmen scattered all over Mexico to the west, north and south of Yucatan erected buildings and made glyphs on paper, wood and stone that differed radically from those of the Maya. In fact you must know that Yucatan was invaded by some of those peoples and they left their stamp upon Chichen Itza and other places. To me, the Nahuan glyphs and the Maya glyphs are as different as night and day, yet there is no valid reason for supposing the Nahua tribesmen to be from Atlantis, Mu or any other similar place.

Concerning the small statuette found by Mr. Ralph Glidden on Catalina. I have seen it and could offer a number of different ways in which it might have reached the island, not the least plausible of which is that it arrived there in possession of some American, Russian or possibly an Aleut Indian during the first four decades of the 19th century. In 1819-20 there was a colony of 60 of these combined nationalities living on Catalina and from the opening of the 19th century until the day the Russians sold Fort Ross to Capt. Sutter, the same miscellany roved from Alaska to the tip of Lower California hunting sea otter and fur seal. And if you wished to open up another avenue of thought along the same line you had better include a few Polynesians in the same racial stew pot. Or again, if you have consulted the records you will know that from the 16th century on, even into our own day, Chinese and Japanese junks, fishing boats, etc. have from time to time been blown off course, caught by ocean currents and cast on shore all the way from Alaska to Peru and any one of those junks could have carried such a statuette. In fact there are so many possible ways that stray item could have reached the island that I would only consider the 'migration' idea as a last resort.

Incidentally, did you see the small, bone toggle head of an Aleutian sea otter harpoon point that Mr. Glidden has which came from an Indian grave on San Nicolas? And, definitely an historic point, the traces of the iron blade yet remain in the slotted end. But, even with the very conclusive documented evidence of the presence of Aleuts upon San Nicolas and the adjacent islands, there could still be a doubt that the harpoon point was carried to the island by human agencies. The point might have been sunk into a sea otter or seal in far northern waters and carried down the coast by the wounded animal who in turn was slain by one of the San Nicolenos and considering it a curiosity or powerful medicine said native might have kept it in his pouch and had it buried with him in death. I know of three or four cases of Eskimo stone and bone arrowheads having been carried south by geese and ducks all the way from the Pacific to the Atlantic coasts, from Delaware Bay to Bakersfield, California.

As far as books on Yucatan and Mexico are concerned, the best on Chichen Itza will be "The Temple of the Warriors" by Earl Morris, this is a two volume set, issued by Carnegie Institution in 1931, I believe.

Then there is the large "Biologia Centrali-Americana" in a number of volumes of text and plates (four in all, I believe) by Alfred P. Maudslay, published London, 1896-1902

If you will consult the following items you will obtain a good bibliography on Yucatan:

Saville, Marshall H.

"Bibliographic Notes on Palenque Chiapas," Indian Notes and Monographs, vol. VI No. 5, Museum of the American Indian, N.Y.C. 1928.

Bibliographic Notes on Uxmal, Yucatan, same series vol. IX No. 2, 1921.

Bibliographic Notes on Xochicalco, Mexico, same series vol. VI, No. 6 1928.

Reports on the Maya Indians of Yucatan, by Mendez, Cubas, Aguilar and Hernandez, same series vol. IX, No. 3, N.Y. 1921.

You might also drop a line to Mr. Stanley J. Wilson, 5369 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, for information on the publications of the Maya Society and the latest book, the second edition, limited of the first English translation of "Yucatan, Before and After the Conquest" by Friar Diego de Landa.

Tulane University of Louisiana has also issued publications on Mexico and Central America, likewise Carnegie Institution of Washington, D. C., Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University; the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, D. C., Field Museum, Chicago, Ill. and the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. Then too there are publications issued by the Museo Nacional of Mexico, Mexico City.

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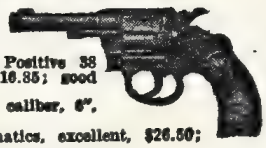

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Prepare for jobs in Broadcasting, Talking Pictures, Television, Wireless, etc., by 12 weeks practical shop training in Coyne Shops. Free Employment Service. Many earn while learning. You don't need previous experience or a lot of book learning. Write for BIG FREE RADIO and TELEVISION BOOK, and my "Pay-Tuition-After-Graduation" Plan.

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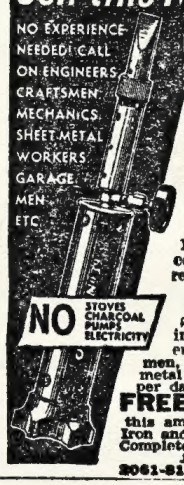
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Works like Magic!

Actually astounding—newly perfected, famous Justrite Combination Soldering Iron and Blow Torch gives super, sizzling-hot blue-white flame for soldering, light-brazing and general shop, laboratory, engineering and repair work. Operates with 100% satisfaction on less than ¼ cent per hour—fully guaranteed by reliable 31-year-old company.

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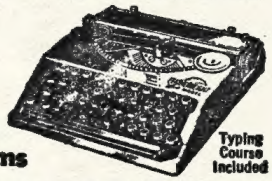

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Please send the DeLuxe FEATHERWEIGHT Portable F. O. B. Chicago, on 10 days Trial. If I decide to keep it I will pay $39.50 cash or $3.00 a month until $42.50 term price is paid. Or, if I am not perfectly satisfied I can return it within the 10-day trial period. For quick shipment give references and occupation

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I have thousands of satisfied customers all over the country who could not afford to pay big prices. I have been making dental plates for many years, by mail. I guarantee you satisfaction or they do not cost you one cent, and I take your word. Teeth made especially for you personally can be tried for sixty days. In one Pennsylvania town alone, 91 people are wearing teeth made by me. They are satisfied and saved money.

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My plates are very beautiful to look at and are constructed to give life-long service and satisfaction. You can look younger at once. They are made with pearly white genuine porcelain teeth. Well fitting and guaranteed unbreakable. Remember you do not send one cent—just your name and address, and we send FREE free impression material and full detailed directions. Be sure to write today for my low prices and complete information. Don't put this off. Do it today.

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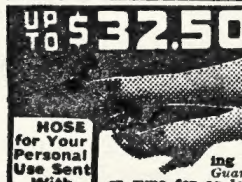

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Cards 4 new ways to read 'em. Xray Cecthru know 1st, 2nd and 3rd without taking card off top. Dice Missers Passers. Quit losing. Send $1.00 for new book "BEAT THE CHEAT." Invisible card ink. Slot Machine. Punchboard exposes. Add 25 cents for 1938 catalog. Send $1.25 to JOHNSON EXPOSES, Box 2488-P, Kansas City, Mo.

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You'll enjoy learning for less than 2c a day. Full particulars Free. Write today

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Treatment mailed on FREE TRIAL. If satisfied, send $1; if not, it's Free. Write for treatment today.

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RAISE GIANT FROGS

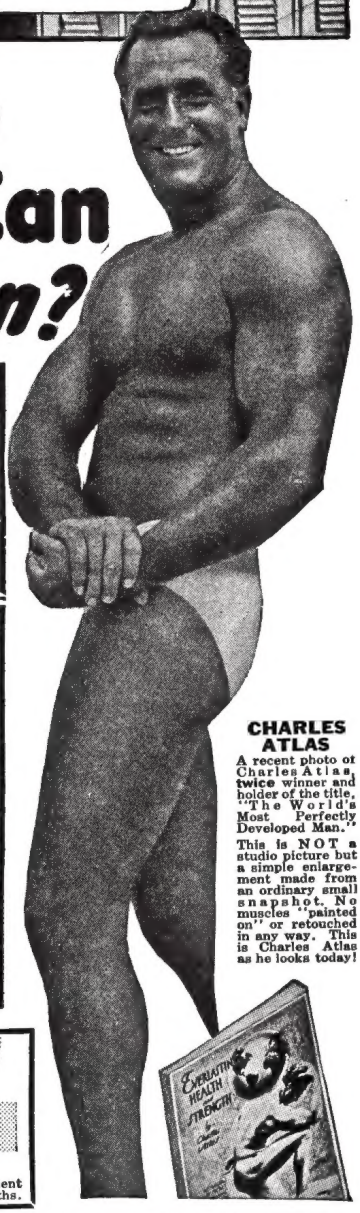
WE BUY! Good prices year round! Other markets waiting for all you can ship. Get ready now for spring eggs. Start small pond, creek, lowland. Free book shows sketch. Send no money. Postcard brings special offer to beginners. American Frog Canning Co. (Dept. 185-D), New Orleans, La.

WANTED — MEN

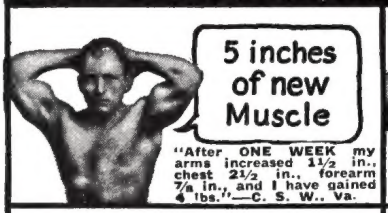
to cast 5 and 10c Novelties, Toy Autos, Ashtrays, etc. Can be done in any spare room and no experience is necessary. A rare opportunity to devote spare or full time to profitable work. Apply only if over 21.

METAL CAST PRODUCTS CO., Dept. T
1696 Boston Road New York, N. Y.

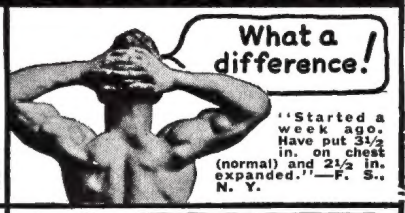
Will You Give Me 7 Days to PROVE I Can Make YOU a *New Man?*



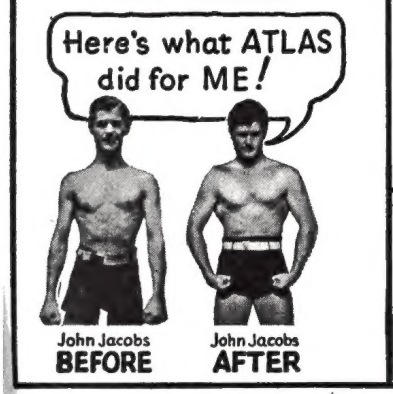
LET ME START SHOWING YOU RESULTS LIKE THESE



"After ONE WEEK my arms increased 1½ in., chest 2½ in., forearm ⅞ in., and I have gained 4 lbs."—C. S. W., Va.



"Started a week ago. Have put 3½ in. on chest (normal) and 2½ in. expanded."—F. S., N. Y.



"Am sending snapshot of wonderful progress. Certainly recommend you for quick results!"—W. G., N. J.

"Your method gives long, smooth muscle. When I started, weighed only 141. Now weigh 170."—T. K., N. Y.

CHARLES ATLAS

A recent photo of Charles Atlas, **twice** winner and holder of the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

This is NOT a studio picture but a simple enlargement made from an ordinary small snapshot. No muscles "painted on" or retouched in any way. This is Charles Atlas as he looks today!

7-Day TRIAL OFFER

I could fill this whole magazine with enthusiastic reports from OTHERS. But what you want to know is—"What can Charles Atlas do for ME?"

Find out—**at my risk!** Right in first 7 days I'll start to PROVE I can turn YOU into a man of might and muscle. And it will be the kind of PROOF you (and anyone else) can SEE, FEEL, MEASURE with a tape!

My FREE BOOK tells about my amazing 7-DAY TRIAL OFFER—an offer no other instructor as ever DARED make! If YOU want smashing strength, big muscles, glowing health—I'll show you results QUICK!

Sterling Silver Cup Being Given Away

This valuable cup, of solid sterling silver, stands about 14 inches high on a black mahogany base. I will award it, engraved, to my pupil who makes the most improvement in his development within the next three months.

FREE BOOK

I myself was once a 97-pound weakling—sickly, half-alive. Then I discovered "Dynamic Tension." And I twice won—against all comers—the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man"!

I have no use for apparatus. "Dynamic Tension" ALONE **(right in your own home)** will start new inches of massive power pushing out your chest—build up your shoulders to champion huskiness—put regular mountains of muscle on your biceps—free you of constipation, pimples—make those stomach muscles of yours hard ridges!

Make me PROVE it! Gamble a postage stamp. Send coupon for my **FREE BOOK AT ONCE!** Address me personally: **Charles Atlas, Dept. 834, 115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.**

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"Are Camels Really different from other Cigarettes?"

A QUESTION OF INTEREST TO EVERY SMOKER

"I've never been very fussy about cigarettes myself. Do you think that Camels are really as different as some people say, Bill?"

"You bet, John! A fellow in any work as hard as selling has to figure a lot of angles on smoking, such as how it agrees with him. And just notice how many salesmen smoke Camels. I changed to Camels and found a distinct difference in the way I enjoyed smoking. Camels *agree* with me!"

...H. W. DALY, 34, rayon salesman, and millions of other steady smokers say: "Camels *are* really different." Camels are preferred by the *largest* body of smokers ever known.

A KISS FROM MARITA (Mrs. Daly) and Bill is off to his job. The Dalys agree about Camels. Mrs. Daly smoked them first. "Now it's Camels with both of us," she says.

A FRIEND DROPS IN. Daly passes the Camels and answers a question: "Steady smoking is the test that shows Camels in a class by themselves. Camels don't make my nerves 'edgy.'"

MARITA'S PLANNING a grand feed. "We enjoy entertaining," she says. "I like plenty of Camels at the table. Camels cheer up one's digestion. They even cheered up Bill's disposition."

ON WEEK-ENDS, Bill's a camera fan. On week days he "pounds the streets." "When I get tired," he says, "I get a quick 'lift' with a Camel."

PEOPLE DO APPRECIATE THE
COSTLIER TOBACCOS
IN CAMELS

THEY ARE THE
LARGEST-SELLING
CIGARETTE IN AMERICA

A matchless blend of finer—
MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS—
Turkish and Domestic

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ONE SMOKER TELLS ANOTHER.. "Camels agree with me"